

# THE BUSINESS LETTER

*Principles and Problems*

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AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED  
TO THE MEMORY OF  
MY MOTHER  
MARIE A. NAETHER

## PREFACE TO REVISED AND ENLARGED EDITION

To-day, as compared with yesterday, the subject of business correspondence is being taught in colleges and universities from a much broader point of view. Its close relation to advertising, salesmanship, psychology, and other subjects is receiving more thoughtful emphasis. Moreover, in order to give the student a thorough grasp of the possibilities of the letter not merely as a transmitter of thought but as a stimulator of more friendly and more profitable business relations, the modern teacher's treatment of the various types of letters is much more comprehensive than formerly.

To meet the increased demand for a fuller treatment of business letter writing to accompany a more scholarly as well as a more businesslike presentation of the subject in the classroom, the author offers this new edition of *The Business Letter*. He has not merely rewritten each chapter in the original edition, supplying fresh illustrations, problems, etc., but he has added eleven new chapters, thus offering plentiful and up-to-date material for a comprehensive treatment of business correspondence.

It is not possible to acknowledge individually the hearty coöperation afforded the author by business men and former students in this country and abroad who, year after year, have supplied him so generously with letters of all kinds. Without their continued aid his task would have been much more difficult. To all of them he is very grateful.

For a painstaking reading of the manuscript and for thoughtful suggestions for improvement, the author once again takes great pleasure in acknowledging his indebtedness to his friend Dr. George Francis Richardson.

C. N.



## PREFACE TO ORIGINAL EDITION

To those desirous of becoming better business correspondents this book presents in concise form the principles of modern business writing, together with typical problems offering opportunity for the application of those principles. Prepared by one who spent no little time at the correspondent's desk in the business office, out "on the firing line" as salesman, and in the classroom as teacher of business subjects, especially salesmanship and business English, the book should be of definite help:

(1) to the student who wishes to secure a thorough grip on the fundamentals of business letter writing;

(2) to the teacher whose need has been a concise "problem text" for use in the classroom in place of a detailed book;

(3) to the business man who earnestly strives to improve his written messages.

The problem material for this volume comes almost without exception *fresh from the files of business men* in various parts of the country; in many cases the original letters have been used. For the sake of variety and completeness, numerous letters for oral or written analysis and discussion have been added.

The letters used as examples are not given as models of the best possible form. They are not without fault. They are merely used as illustrations of letters that were actually successful in getting the desired results in given business transactions.

To teachers using the book as a text the writer would suggest that they urge the students to whom problems are assigned *always to improve on the statement of the problem* as it appears in the text—to throw their best efforts into the solution they are seeking to effect, and in this wise to produce business letters essentially their own.

Lack of space forbids individual mention of over two hundred business firms which for a period extending over four years have so generously contributed material for the problems and illustrations. The author takes this opportunity to thank all these firms for their hearty coöperation.

For constant encouragement in the preparation of this volume extend-

ing over a period of two years, for timely suggestions and help and for a final, painstaking reading of the manuscript, the w fully acknowledges his indebtedness to Dr. George F. Rich, former colleague.

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PART I

ESSENTIALS OF THE BUSINESS LETTER

## THE IMPORTANCE OF THE BUSINESS LETTER

*Present Status*

Ever since the inauguration of government postal service, the letter has been the preferred means of long-distance communication between men in business and their customers. To-day, perhaps more than at any time in the past, it is appreciated as a convenient, economical, prompt, safe, and direct carrier of written business thought. Its world-wide usefulness has been both intensified and broadened by such modern inventions as the radio and television, the airship and airplane. Witness the new lease on life given the business letter by air mail alone! True, its century-old popularity rises and falls with the fortunes of business: periods of prosperity have promoted it; periods of depression have checked it. The government's asking one one-hundredth of a dollar more or less for carriage affects almost overnight the volume of business letters written and despatched. But despite its ups and downs, the letter, reaching and joining, so to speak, far-distant minds, remains the message carrier supreme, owing largely to its exceedingly elastic usefulness.

*Acknowledged Utility*

Certainly the man of business, particularly here in America, where unusually sharp competition forces the energetic, intelligent, and almost instantaneous use of every last-minute improvement in the system of communication—and other systems as well—has been quick to detect and to affirm the far-reaching and conveniently flexible utility of the letter in the world of commerce. For he knows full well that, next to contact by person or by telephone, there is at his command no more direct, no more personal, and decidedly no more private means of communication than the business letter. And, of course, it is much cheaper than either personal or telephone contact. There exists almost no legitimate function in modern business which a letter, provided it is conceived with intelligent, purposeful imagination and executed with pleasing, practical efficiency, cannot be made to perform satisfactorily. It is a far too little appreciated commonplace to affirm that by means of the *right* letters promising prospects may be secured in a reasonably short time for any legitimate business (though

by the same process they have often been secured for illegitimate businesses, too), and again by the *right* letters induced to become regular and satisfied customers. Once orders are booked, the letter is mainly relied upon to transact with the trade all routine business, such as answering queries and objections concerning goods or service, filling orders, satisfying claims and complaints, arranging for credit, collecting moneys due, and multitudinous other matters common to commercial intercourse. The success of mail-order merchants, such as Montgomery Ward & Company, Sears, Roebuck & Company, the New Process Company, the Larkin Company, and others, testifies to the power of the letter as a mighty business promoter. To-day almost every marketable product—from airplanes and anthracite to zithers and zwieback—and every conceivable service—from advertising to undertaking—is profitably promoted by letter.

### *Plentiful Propaganda*

Fortified with facts and figures, more or less imposing, writers in almost every issue of *Printers' Ink*, *Postage and the Mailbag*, *The Printing Art Quarterly*, and similar periodicals vouch vigorously, at times almost vehemently, for the business letter as one of the most formidable and incisive weapons that can be wielded in the incessant fight for more business and more profit. In enthusiastic terms they report of dissatisfied customers transformed into "boosters," of "lost" customers returned safely to the fold, of delinquent customers made to pay eagerly, of new customers added to the firm's roster—all by letter. Little wonder that more and more business firms follow suit, even if not always thoughtfully, thus swelling to enormous proportions the number of letters wending their way through the daily mails, on business bound. A resultful letter published in book or periodical for the first time furnishes an immediate incentive (or excuse) for competitors and others to despatch a similar one to their own customers and friends with due haste. High schools, colleges, and universities, by their emphasis on courses in business correspondence and direct-mail advertising, annually convert thousands of young men and women to the cause of improving the business letter. Publishers each year bring out many a volume devoted to the useful art of business writing; advertising and so-called better-letter clubs in almost every city stir up interest in the subject among their many members.

### *Dangerous Overemphasis*

The country-wide, often indiscriminate, and illogical propaganda in favor of the use of letters, especially as media of direct sales promotion,

has caused the average recipient (often the business man himself!) to give many of them but scant attention. For need it be emphasized that commonness breeds contempt? So prodigious indeed has been and is still the dollar-and-cents waste in this department of business promotion that the demand for a considerable time now has been for fewer and superior letters. However, as long as their unit cost, including postage, remains comparatively low, as long as letter campaigns harvest orders sufficient to pay expenses, and as long as the desire for immediate and big profits is the business man's ruling passion, there can and is likely to be but little improvement in the situation.

To-day, as the logical consequence of this expensive overemphasis, business and other men no longer look on the letter as primarily a personal communication—a message meant for but one person. Regardless of its form, they are inclined to suspect that in many cases it was prepared for mass appeal. Thus the business letter has lost to some extent its most valuable asset, the one that distinguished it from many other forms of advertising—the individual and personal regard in which it was held by the recipient.

Whatever other limitations the letter has as a business getter are largely imposed by the writer and the sender. No matter how plausible the sales story in a letter, to a recipient who is not a genuine prospect it is of no moment whatever. The most ingenious collection appeal, if sent at the wrong time or to the wrong debtor, will fail to draw money and will induce ill will. The shabby appearance of a letter, or the wrong tone or faulty English within it, immediately negates whatever positive and productive impression it might otherwise have left. No product is better than its maker. Sloppy minds usually give birth to sloppy thoughts. The fact that, according to the best authorities, the average run of business letters is mediocre points to an average correspondent whose aim is low, whose writing equipment is faulty, and whose maxim (typically American) too often is "Don't worry—it'll get by."

### *Potent Letters Needed*

The hurrying multitude of business letters to-day lacks potency. Whereas yesterday the business man despatched half a dozen carefully written, personal messages, to-day he will mass 1,000, 10,000, even 100,000 for a wholesale attack. But the power of this medium, once so private, to produce favorable returns has been greatly diminished: first, by the limitless frequency with which it is used to fight for business; second, by the steadily increasing competition in every phase of commer-



cial enterprise. Finding his morning's mail stacked high with letters and other kinds of appeals, few of which he could really accept even if he wanted to, the average business man is inclined to give each such communication less and less attention. The resulting decrease in the average letter's pulling power has prompted the employment of high-powered letter specialists and of myriads of letter-shops to inspire and to "personalize."

The worst feature of the whole situation is that even the lowly routine letter, which of necessity must compete for favor at every step with its aristocratic confrère, the sales letter, is likewise beginning to be ineffective, despite stunning letterheads ingeniously sketched by creative artists. Moreover, it requires no pessimist to affirm that in the last half-century the business letter has shown little improvement. Any one who compares line for line the letter as it was written about 100 years ago with that written to-day will conclude that, while the former was beautifully penned on unimprinted stationery and contained perhaps a few more stock phrases than to-day's product, the latter, despite improved layout, is much less personal. Apparently the increasingly frequent injections of overdoses of super-salesmanship have proved somewhat of an antitoxin.

The truth of the matter is that the average man in business is not a trained, patient writer; and, in all probability, he never will be. Further than that, dictation is at best only a minor part of his daily routine, discharged often with more haste than judgment. The very commonness of the task has eased the average correspondent into a rut from which he finds it difficult to extricate himself despite the helps given by magazines and books and, of course, the "pep" talks made by advertising "he-men." He treads a vicious and ironical circle: he is disgusted with the large number of mediocre letters flooding his mail; at the same time in the course of his daily work he grinds out an equally inferior product, thus aggravating the evil.

The remedy for this deplorable situation is at once simple and drastic: write fewer and better letters. Employ (and there are such persons!) some one who *likes to write* and knows how; then pay him well—some one who thinks of customers and prospects as friendly, red-blooded men with wills of their own: who will take time to translate principles and policies, merchandise and service, *first* in terms of profit to the customer, and *afterward* in terms of profit to the seller; some one to whom the embedding of good-will and service in business letters is "Kinderspiel." Such a writer will soon rid letters of all bombastic, ultra-conventional, and ultra-modern verbiage and begin to impress correspondents in a way

that is forceful because it is simple, straightforward, and human. And the more time he is allowed for his important task, the more thought- and action-provoking letters is he likely to fashion. Specifically, business letters to-day can be much improved, because

- (1) too many of them lack careful aim—they are not planned;
- (2) too many of them lack a strong voice—their English is trite, feeble, and futile;
- (3) too many of them lack an attractive personality—they are filled with *I's*, *we's*, and other objectionable egocentricities.

### PROBLEMS

1. Write a letter to your instructor, informing him of your experience in writing and in business, with a view to giving him a brief but comprehensive idea of your attitude toward business letter writing.
2. Procure a number of business letters from a local firm (preferably all dictated by the same person) and show in detail to what extent they possess the qualities of good business letters and to what extent they lack them.
3. (a) Name the outstanding weakness of the following letter.  
(b) Rewrite the letter.

Dear Mr. Booth:

I have the pleasure of enclosing your membership card and welcome you to our ranks. I hope to hear from you soon in regard to coöperation concerning the growth of the United Lubrication Engineers in Maryland. We have a number of men in the Standard of Maryland, however they are all located in Baltimore and vicinity. I believe you are the first member being in Monticello. Five members are necessary to start a local chapter. For the time and during next year no dues will be charged to local chapters in the ULEM. If local chapters want to charge something for the payment of local expenses, they can do so, however the ULEM head offices has to give its O.K. on the amount to be charged. Local officers are usually appointed by ULEM for the first six months after which the local members are required to elect local officers by secret balloting.

Yours very truly,

4. Criticize the following response received by the secretary of a commercial club in reply to an inquiry addressed to an "exclusive French restaurant":

Dear Sirs,

Yours of the 30th rec'd and will be very pleased to give you the information in regards to our dinners. We can give you a very nice din-

ner for a dollar which includes the room for the evening for twenty people.

The dinner consisting of, fruit cocktail, soup, choice of half broiled chicken, filet mignon, or tom turkey. Fresh vegetables, potatoes, special salad, choice of dessert and drinks.

Hoping that we may have the pleasure to serve you.

Very Truly Yours,

5. From current periodicals compile a list of at least three articles which deal with phases of business writing, giving the exact source in each case. Read these articles and then submit a critical summary of them to your instructor in a suitable letter.
6. The letters given below were written by a retail and a wholesale furniture house, respectively. Recast the second letter to make it a satisfactory adjustment of the complaint.

Gentlemen:

We ask that you be kind enough to replace for us one only bed rail for a bow-foot bed which we purchased from you some time ago. Our customer complained about the rail not fitting a long time ago, and we have neglected to ask you for another one.

The rail is for a bow-foot bed and is the same type that you are using on your present style of bed. It is a steel rail. Please send us one on your next truck load to Pawtucket.

Yours truly,

Gentlemen:

We regret our inability to comply with your request of Dec. 3 for a replacement on a bed rail for a Bow-Foot bed, which you purchased from us sometime ago, inasmuch as this number has been discontinued and we have no more rails in stock, and do not know where to send you for a Bow-Foot rail, unless the Acme Mfg. Co. of this city might have some.

Yours truly,

7. Criticize; then rewrite the following correspondence:

Gentlemen:

I think it is absolutely outrageous the way your corporation cheats the public over the pay station telephones. I have lost at least 20¢ per month, sometimes more, putting my nickel in—and not getting my number—and the nickel does not always come back. Then, there is the five

cents wasted to tell the operator about it who takes one's name and address and the matter is completely ignored from then on.

This morning I wasted 15¢ trying to get Morrow 6089, and instead of telling me the line was out of order your operator cut me off and again my money is gone.

I wouldn't have one of your telephones in my home if I had to use telegrams to get in touch with my next door neighbor.

Fannie Brier

Dear Miss Brier:

We regret that you have been inconvenienced in trying to call Morrow 6089 and are enclosing a remittance of 15¢, the amount lost while attempting to place this call.

We appreciate your calling this matter to our attention and will do all we can to improve our service.

Yours very truly,

## CHAPTER II

### ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF THE BUSINESS LETTER

#### *Personal Appeal*

Everybody looks forward to the receipt of letters, at times with an anticipation bordering on childish delight—that is, if the letters are likely to be of a personal nature, if their contents show unmistakably that they are meant for one individual. This then is, and very likely will always be, the business letter's one best bet; it brings a personal message. And no amount and manner of more or less obvious camouflage, such as a "personalized" form letter generously sprinkled with "Dear Mr. Brown," "Yes, Mr. Brown," "Sign here, Mr. Brown," can supplant in the recipient's eye the genuine, person-to-person appeal which earmarks the individually dictated letter. Moreover, these "perfectly personalized" letters frequently create an attitude on the part of the receiver so doubtful and negative as to preclude anything but an unfavorable consideration: "I wonder if this letter is really half as personal as it's made to sound. Judging from the way in which my name is spelled and stuck in, it is probably just an advertising form letter. Why couldn't the sender just as lief have been frank about it? Maybe he takes me for an easy mark! Well, the next time I won't even look at a thing like that."

If a business letter opens with "I" or "we," it is more or less handicapped from the outset. If it continues in this egotistic fashion, it is doomed to early discard no matter how alluring and colorful the printed letterhead or how crisp and crunchy the bond. Common business sense dictates the subordination of the writer's self and viewpoint to the reader's. Everyday contacts with others teach us that in order to command their favorable attention we must say or do things likely to further *their* interests, whatever these may be. Men are in business for *their* sake, for *their* profit. They expect your letters to help them achieve this to them all-important end. Is it not reasonable and logical therefore to cultivate the "you" note—to stress always the reader's, not the writer's, personal interests? To be sure, the pill should not be coated with too many "you" 's, for the one extreme is fully as bad as the other. The ideal is to write with the reader's interest

in mind, somewhat in the appealing manner in which a successful, not a clever, salesman talks with an old customer whom he knows very well.

This one-man appeal distinguishes the good letter from the usual forms of mass advertising and gives it a decidedly practical advantage over them. In view of the import and the uniqueness of this advantage, it behooves every business correspondent to study and to practice in all his letters the injection of a vitalizing and pleasing "you" element. A few simple illustrations will help to fix in mind some of the principles just presented:

A  
(Weak)

As requested, herewith please find enclosed latest circular showing our Midget Radio Supreme in its various styles and prices.

A-1  
(Improved)

In reply to your letter of Sept. 25, we are pleased to enclose our latest circular on the Midget Radio Supreme. It not only shows you plainly the many different styles in which this popular radio comes, but it also gives you their respective prices.

B  
(Weak)

The BB Hummer Drill, Order 769, was repaired, it being found that the rotor worm gear and worm shaft were worn bad. The rotor worm gear was replaced, but being entirely out of worm shafts, have asked factory to ship one by parcel post.

B-1  
(Improved)

Inspection of your BB Hummer Drill, our Order No. 769, received yesterday, shows that the rotor worm gear and the worm shaft are badly worn. We are replacing the worm gear and, being out of worm shafts, are asking our factory to ship one direct to you.

C  
(Weak)

We trust the copy of Bennett's Commercial History which we sent you about two weeks ago was promptly received.

This history gives a general survey of the commercial development of the world from the earli-

est times to the present. It attempts to interpret the history of civilization from the commercial point of view, showing the many interrelations between commerce and the other factors in the progress of civilization. It may be used as a text in colleges and universities that have regular courses in economic history.

We hope this book is adapted to the needs of some of the classes in your institution and would like to have a prompt decision in the matter.

C-1  
(Improved)

Have you as yet had an opportunity to examine the copy of Bennett's Commercial History which we sent you August 8, at your request?

In addition to giving a general survey of the world's commercial development, it affords a thoughtful interpretation of the history of civilization from the earliest to the present time.

It may interest you to know that since we wrote you last, this standard text has been adopted by the state universities of Iowa, Michigan, and Idaho, which adoptions bring the total since publication to over one hundred fifty.

When you have finished going over this comprehensive and up-to-date book, please write us your opinion of it. A stamped return envelope is enclosed for your convenience.

Who reads *your* letters? Men or women? Haberdashers, hardware merchants, farmers, undertakers, bankers, or policemen? Kansas wheat or Texas rice farmers; village or city hardware dealers; bankers specializing in savings or in commercial accounts; undertakers serving the Negro or the white district of the town; educated policemen or just policemen? What has your audience in common—location, sex, age, occupation, nationality, education, wealth, religion, habits, desires, ailments? Does it consist of prospective, new, or old customers? If prospects, how were their names first obtained—through advertising in the *Christian Science Monitor* or in the *Saturday Evening Post*? If customers, what kind and quality of goods or services do they order, and how often? Do they buy on credit or for cash? These are some of the questions which the writer-salesman must answer to his own satisfaction before he can hope to adjust his writings to his audience. A mental close-up of prospect or customer is an indispensable aid to successful business correspondence.

When the copy was prepared for a series of letters offering fine books to educated men and women, the core-thought was: "Since you are a lover of books, and a person of taste and judgment, you will no doubt wish to avail yourself of this opportunity to obtain . . ." It was the literary interest which the prospects had in common that furnished the cue to a very direct and personal reader approach. To an independent retailer who was greatly troubled with chain-store competition, the manufacturer of a cash-register wrote: "I understand from Mr. Howe, our salesman in your territory, that you, like many other independent grocers, are suffering from chain-store competition." Thus, by means of a single sentence, the writer established a bond of mutual understanding between the reader and himself.

Among the quickest and most useful ways of securing data to aid the letter-writer in envisaging his reader are:

1. *Personal contact with the firm's prospects and customers.* This is easily possible in the retail and specialty fields. In others, the correspondent should occasionally accompany the salesman into the territory in order to study afresh the customer and his needs.

2. *New and old letter-files.* Previous correspondence with the customer, especially over a period of months or years, reveals character unmistakably. His stationery may indicate old-fashioned or modern business ways. His language may disclose an illiterate or an educated mind. The atmosphere and tone of the letter may point to an essentially self-centered, or else to a generous and broad-minded individual. Even the hand-written signature will tell something about the writer's character.



plants, buildings, commodities—all physical properties are subject to changing values.” And, finally, a printer who inquired of an editor the exact nature of good-will as applied to the printing business was informed that “it accrues to the printer who combines honest service and fine workmanship into a profitable business. These qualities win the respect and the confidence of all customers, and a good report of honesty and fair dealing in their experience tends to win new patrons.”

Recently the president of the New York Telephone Company invited to his headquarters the executives of his firm’s most prominent customers for luncheon, for a visit to the plant, and, most important of all, for a frank discussion of the quality of telephone service they were getting. His plan was to assure these large buyers of telephone service that the New York Telephone Company would gladly coöperate in rendering more efficient service and in smoothing out existing misunderstandings promptly. His action resulted from a keen realization of the importance of good-will as a builder of new business and a stabilizer of old. To the question: “What is your most valuable asset?” the president of a well-known mail-order house replied unhesitatingly: “Our master mailing list. If we lost our plant, our stock of goods, and all our equipment, we could replace these items soon, but if we lost our list of customers, whose good-will it has taken us years to obtain, we would have to start in business all over again.”

The business letter can engender good-will by expressing honestly the firm’s policy toward its customers in all matters pertaining to the sale of its merchandise. Usually, the larger and more successful the organization, the more marked and precise is its expression of good-will in letters and similar contacts with customers and the public at large. That is true not merely because its good-will is often valued at millions of dollars (over twenty-one millions in the case of the Allied Chemical & Dye Corporation), but mainly because its correspondents are trained to capitalize this precious asset somehow in every letter that bears the company’s insignia. If the average business letter were dictated by an executive, with his usual high regard for the importance of good-will, its quality would, at least in this respect, be much higher than it is. The bulk, however, of the average firm’s correspondence must of necessity be entrusted to routine workers, who often lack woefully the executive point of view. For this reason many a business letter literally scowls when it should smile, or else seems to regard the customer’s problems with a complacent indifference destructive rather than constructive of good-will.

Like a sunny smile brightening and clearing a man’s face, a friendly

its significance should suggest to him many ways to evoke cordial feeling and the thought: "Mr. Customer, it is our first thought to-day, and it will be our first thought to-morrow, to serve you so promptly and so well that when you require our goods or services again, you will gladly come back to us, secure in the conviction that here you will get a square deal."

### *Service with a Smile*

Much defined and much abused is service in this country. Every business renders it, personalizes it, charges for it. Every customer demands it, uses (or misuses) it, and pays for it. Next to good-will, the element of service is what makes or breaks buying preference. Let us cite a case.

In search of a fine camera a man entered a metropolitan photo supply shop, made his want known, and after some inspection selected what he thought would suit his particular need. Not wishing to invest considerable money without first obtaining some concrete proof of the camera's worth to him, he asked for a practical demonstration—asked that a few pictures be taken with it just outside the store, for the day was bright and cheery. But again and again the dapper young man behind the counter demurred on the grounds that by no means could he absent himself from the store (as a matter of fact he did not have to; moreover, there were other clerks to take his place) for any length of time, that it had never been the policy of his employer (!) to demonstrate the picture-taking quality of any camera in stock, even though the prospective customer might offer to pay the cost of the films, of the developing, and of the printing. Furthermore, he contended rather insistently that the customer should demand no proof other than the snapshots in the firm's album, which, so the clerk maintained, had been taken with a similar camera. Disgusted with the stupid and clumsy treatment accorded him, the man in search of a fine camera some months later sought out a similar shop in another city. Here there was explained to him with friendly patience the somewhat intricate operation of a particularly fast camera. The frank request for a practical demonstration was met with "Immediately, sir, and gladly." Outside it was raining. Having first offered the prospect his umbrella, the *salesman* proceeded to take and to let the other take a number of pictures. Back in the store half an hour later, he inquired of the prospect his telephone address and asked him when it would be convenient for him to call again: "I will have these films developed and copies made by four o'clock this afternoon, when I will 'phone you the results. If you like the pictures, we shall be pleased to have you come to the store and purchase the camera you selected. Otherwise, you are under no obligation whatever." Promptly

at four the customer was informed that the pictures had turned out well. An hour later he was again in the store to complete a transaction in which he had been shown every courtesy and consideration that the occasion demanded—a transaction during which was rendered him business service of a very high order. We have in these anecdotes the old contrasts of clerk versus salesman, of stupidity versus intelligence. Similar instances occur just as frequently in correspondence. There the prospect must have more skilful handling, for the writer cannot be present to watch the reader's facial expression and gauge the effect the message may produce.

Certain mail-order houses used to advertise "We pay the freight." Manufacturers offer their dealers the services of their research laboratories for the asking. Department stores entertain their patrons with music and lectures, meanwhile caring for their children. Not a few retailers maintain information and service bureaus at much expense as an accommodation to customers and others. Service plus is the watchword in the world of business to-day. Seemingly the extreme standardization of both quality and price of life's necessities and luxuries in America makes unbiased choice when buying so difficult that the standard of service rendered *with* the actual sale often furnishes the only incentive for the buyer to patronize a certain business again.

Every business which writes letters to customers has numerous splendid opportunities to render service which, being distinctive, unsolicited, and above all unobtrusive, provides suitable means of cementing firmly the link that binds the one to the other. Replies to requests for information, letters checking up on the shipment and arrival of orders or on the adjustment of complaints, offers of consumer and dealer coöperation—these and numerous others offer frequent occasion to the alert writer-salesman to inject the service element into his messages.

How this may be accomplished, the following sentences and paragraphs will serve to show:

While we do not stock the technical books asked for in your letter of May 20, we are procuring them for you through our wholesaler's connections, and at no added cost to you. You will receive them direct from the wholesaler.

We are glad that you found the facilities of our dealer co-operative department of service. Please command them again at any time.

Within 10 days after receipt of the defective lot of machine screws, we will make satisfactory replacement at no charge.

Because your questions concerning the feasibility of using air transportation in your territory can hardly be done justice by letter, I have asked Mr. Willard Willoughby, our traffic expert in Detroit, to consult with you personally.

Though, owing to present business conditions, we see no early possibility of appointing you or any one else to represent us in Guatemala, we nevertheless appreciate keenly your interest in our products. The catalogue which we are sending you to-day will give you the information for which you asked.

Should you decide to stay at The Ambassador when you come to Los Angeles, we promise to make you very comfortable in every way.

Every letter, whatever its particular function, should be a selling letter of the first order. Even though it is not aimed at securing business or profit directly or immediately, it should always pave the way for agreeable future business relations. For, as we have already seen, the asset of good-will manifested in consumer confidence and preference transcends by far in real productive worth the quality and price of product or service, the standards, and the provisions of a firm's policies, no matter how painstakingly these may have been planned.

This purpose the business letter will accomplish best if it moves its reader to a cordial interest in its message and to a friendly sympathy with the firm, its goods, its policies, and, most desirable of all, its ability to serve him efficiently at all times. So written and so conceived, it cannot fail to bring him into a relationship harmonious with the writer and therefore possibly profitable. To make such a relationship lasting, the letter must be open and aboveboard; it must be thoroughly "human" to represent fully and truly the writer in an important business transaction.

Experience over many years has amply shown that there is really no legitimate business which cannot make constructive use of letters, and that usually a business is not much more effective than are its most helpful representatives—its letters.

## PROBLEMS

1. Determine the chief faults of the following letters; then rewrite them:

A

Dear Sir:

In reply to your letter of Oct. 29, will say we cannot tell you definitely at this time what the schedule of our new streamline trains

between Chicago and New Orleans will be when these trains go into service nor what the fare between these two points will be on the new train.

We are now building two nine-car Pullman trains, one of which is intended for service between Chicago and New Orleans on a weekly schedule. The date when the new train will be placed in service is as yet undetermined, but it is now the consensus of opinion that it will be some time during next February.

The schedule for streamline train service between Chicago and New Orleans has not as yet been set. A test run of one of these trains recently made resulted in a time-saving run, and in all probability the regular schedule will be about the same as that made in the test run.

The matter of fares has not as yet been determined, and I know of no changes in present fares which are being contemplated.

Yours very truly,

B

Dear Sir:

We acknowledge receipt of your letter of October 31 with reference to squash rackets.

We carry Spalding rackets which are priced from \$6 to \$8.50. We would recommend for heavy play our \$30 racket strung with gut or silk, as you wish. We price the gut-strung racket at \$8; the other at \$7.

We hope this information answers the questions asked and that it will be helpful in the formulation of your decision and result in an early visit to our store for the purchase of the above merchandise.

Very truly yours,

2. Procure one or more form letters; then write a brief critique of each letter, commenting especially on its having or lacking the personal element.
3. Familiarize yourself with a business or technical magazine with a view to getting a close-up of its typical subscriber. Then prepare a statement of the subscriber's supposed personal characteristics, such as would help a letter-writer to visualize the recipient of his messages.
4. Recall one or more experiences with retailers who did or did not give you "service with a smile." Develop these recollections into a five- or ten-minute talk to be given in class.
5. Study the following correspondence from the standpoint of suitable expression of good-will. Prepare a statement of changes you would make in these letters and your reasons for making them.

## A

✓ Gentlemen:

We are taking advantage of the offer which you made us when you wrote us not long ago, that whenever we had any complaints, not to hesitate to take the matter up with you.

Our Receiving Department and our Warehouse have been complaining very seriously of late about the way in which you are marking the cases or cartons which you ship to us. Owing to the fact that you are simply marking the contents of the cases in crayon, you can readily appreciate that by the time the shipment reaches us, it is very difficult to decipher the writing so that we do not know frequently what the cases contain.

Crayon is not a permanent record and we cannot understand why you do not properly stencil the cases as you have done in former years. On account of using crayon, it is necessary for us in many instances to unpack the cases to find out their contents. While this practice might be saving at your end, it is entailing considerable waste of time and effort on our part. We must insist that a change be made immediately.

We shall, therefore, appreciate your coöperation in taking the matter up with your Shipping Department. Unless the condition is corrected, it will be necessary for us to take other steps and perhaps necessitate our stating to you that we will refuse to accept further shipments unless the cases are properly stenciled as to contents and quantity.

Please assure us that the condition will be corrected at once.

Yours very truly,

## B

Gentlemen:

We have your letter of February 26 regarding the marking of our shipping cases and are more than anxious to rectify this matter so there will be no further cause for inconvenience.

Accordingly, each shipping case or carton will be clearly stenciled with contents and quantity.

Up to this time, merchandise that we regularly carry in our stockroom already cased up for shipment has been stenciled. This will include water bottles, ice caps, invalid cushions, bathing slippers, etc., when ordered in case lots.

Items packed in our stockroom from shelf stock represent the minority of the cases shipped to you and these are the ones that have been marked with crayon. No one on our present staff recalls ever having stenciled

cases containing odd quantities of an item or an assortment of miscellaneous items.

Naturally, we are very anxious to handle our shipments in a manner that will serve your purpose best and we are sure that the routine we have established for your shipments from now on will solve the problem very nicely.

Very truly yours,

## CHAPTER III

### THE ENGLISH OF THE BUSINESS LETTER

#### A Whole Composition

Every business letter may be regarded as a unit of writing complete in itself. Though, like other forms of composition, it may vary in length according to its importance and treatment of its subject-matter, it should preferably have the three essential parts of wholeness—beginning, middle, end. The exception is the rare one-sentence and one-paragraph letter (really only a note), for example: "Please send me your latest catalogue." Every good business letter should contain a clear thought clothed in impelling English and developed progressively from start to finish. Such thought, provided the letter is read at all, cannot fail to impress.

#### A. *Orderliness*

In the task of reaching the reader, nothing helps more than appropriate arrangement of contents. The beginning-middle-end sequence is the appropriate arrangement. It simplifies the task of both writer and reader by saving their time and their energy. The latter advantage is especially welcome to the business man, whose mind the daily routine crowds with a confusing multitude of ocular and auditory impressions. Under such conditions the chances of the individual business letter to succeed are slight. But they can be materially increased if every letter is made the subject of careful planning, by which, incidentally, all persons involved—dictator, stenographer, and reader—benefit. Assuredly the advantages of economy of time and effort should be sufficient to inspire every business correspondent to practise orderliness.

Specific outlines according to which certain types of letters may with advantage be written or dictated will be found in later chapters. The general three-step plan of the letter, presented in more detail, is as follows:

*Beginning:*      Designed to meet existing conditions or for the meeting of future conditions in such a way as to prepare the reader's mind to receive favorably the writer's message.



*Message proper:* Designed to develop clearly, comprehensively, and persuasively the core-thought of the whole letter—its reason for being.

*Close:* Designed to re-emphasize the chief purpose of the letter and to leave a good impression on the reader.

## ILLUSTRATIONS

A

Dear Sir:

*Beginning:* Many thanks for your inquiry of May 6 regarding the cost of mounting rattlesnakes.

*Message proper:* Since these snakes are common in Southern California, we receive many orders for mounting them either as specimens or as trophies. The price varies, according to the size of the snake, from \$5 to \$15. We guarantee the artistic and lifelike preparation of all snakes accepted.

If at all convenient, please bring your rattlesnake in, as we prefer to do the skinning ourselves. Otherwise, remove the skin, by splitting along the belly, saving the head and skull. Then salt the skin liberally.

*Close:* We shall be glad of any early opportunity to serve you quickly and satisfactorily.

Very truly yours,

B

Gentlemen:

*Beginning:* As a student in Marketing at the University of Washington, I am endeavoring to gather reliable data on the subject of

"Advertising Washington Apples"

on which I am preparing a report.

*Message proper:* Since you have advertised Washington apples for a number of years, may I ask you to fill out the attached sheet of questions and to return it to me in the enclosed, stamped envelope?

*Close:* Please be assured that I shall appreciate whatever information you may see fit to give me in answer to my queries.

Very truly yours,

The exact sequence of ideas presented in successive paragraphs depends naturally on the kind of letter and its particular purpose. Usually in the first paragraph contact is established with the reader through specific reference to the subject of the message:

The property statement which you sent us February 10 will certainly aid us in extending you further credit.

Your special Order No. 8975, which on March 25 you report as not having reached you, is being duplicated to-day.

It is a pleasure to answer your questions concerning the service record of Amos Moore, our former employee.

The terms on your April 15 invoice, concerning which you wrote April 21, are 1/30; n/60.

In the paragraphs following the first, and constituting the body of the letter, the subject is as fully developed as its importance and urgency may suggest. Here the essential requirement is progression. The recipient of your letter, as he reads it, must feel that he is getting somewhere: he must understand clearly, and after a single reading, what you wish of him. Usually a separate paragraph is used for the statement and development of each successive phase of the subject. Like rungs in a ladder, paragraphs in a letter greatly assist the reader in his "mental climb"—his quick comprehension of your message. Moreover, a letter well paragraphed looks much easier and *is* much easier to read than one less thoughtfully arranged.

A

(Unparagraphed)

Gentlemen:

Replying to your letter of June 24th with reference to shortage of 20 Transom Chains'OB 2-12" in shipment invoiced on May 29th. Upon checking our shipping records we find that through an error these Transom Chains were left out of the shipment and your invoice in amount \$4.50 is, therefore, in order. Enclosed you will find a credit memorandum, in amount \$4.50, to correct. Hoping this meets with your approval and assuring you of better service in the future, we are,

Yours very truly,

A-1

(Paragraphed)

Gentlemen:

*Contact:* Thank you for your letter of June 24, calling our attention to the shortage of Transom Chains in your Order No. 765, shipped May 29.

*Explanation:* Through error our shipping department left 20 Transom Chains OB 2-12" out of this order. In accordance with your instructions we are pleased, therefore, to enclose a credit memorandum for \$4.50 to cover this shortage.

*Close:* In the future we shall be more careful with your shipments.

Yours very truly,

Of course, the more intricate the subject-matter, the longer the letter and the more urgent the necessity of paragraphing. To paragraph each separate sentence, as is sometimes done to gain attention, makes for a choppy and disjointed composition. A letter so divided gives the impression of being piecemeal instead of whole.

In addition to this more or less mechanical means of paragraphing, there is another method of attaining progression in business composition: the use of suitable link-words or phrases between paragraphs. Such connectives may indicate a variety of relationships, among the more important of which are these:

*Addition:* Moreover, this is not the first time we have had cause to complain of the inferior quality of Mission tires.

Equally important with the preceding is the matter of old-age insurance, to which we called your attention last May.

Another cause of the high price of shoes is the present scarcity of leather, to which I wish to call your particular attention now.

*Purpose:* With this aim in view, we shall change the specifications and have them ready for you promptly by January 15.

For this particular purpose, we have extended our offer only to those customers whose credit rating is A1.

*Consequence:*

Accordingly, please excuse us this time from contracting for advertising space in your magazine.

In consequence of the foregoing, we have decided to ask all district managers and salesmen to be at headquarters on June 25.

The results have been: first, better working conditions; secondly, less sickness; lastly, increased production.

*Contrast:*

In spite of your generous offer to keep the defective parts this time, we must ask you to return them to us for immediate replacement.

On the contrary, you have been given every opportunity to meet this just obligation since it came due six months ago.

Nevertheless, we must ask you to pack future shipments of glassware more carefully.

Key-words or phrases placed at or near the beginning of paragraphs, and repetition of words or phrases within the paragraph, may also serve as bridges for the writer's thoughts:

Your invoices of November 8 and 28 refer to the same kind of lubricator, only one of which was purchased by Lent Brothers.

This matter was adjusted with Mr. Fleming of your Los Angeles Office.....

We are confident that your Los Angeles Office will verify the fact that Lent Brothers purchased only one lubricator.

Smooth progress from paragraph to paragraph is made difficult when a pronoun is used instead of its antecedent in the beginning sentence of a paragraph.

## A

### (Faulty)

In order to properly support your claim, it will be necessary for you to fill out and return to us attached Form F.D. 1554, also attach all documents enumerated on this form.

This done, your claim will be given further attention.

A-1

(Improved)

So that we may adjust your claim No. 5023 properly, please fill out and return to us, together with the necessary documents, the attached form F.D. 1554.

This action on your part will enable us to hasten final settlement of your claim.

Changing the subject of the letter from "I" to "we" or from "we" to "I" and changing its point of view by following active with passive construction, or vice versa, all for no good reason, are other violations of orderly thought presentation very common in business letters.

If a correspondent of a firm composed of more than one person dictates a letter pertaining to his firm's business, or if the letter is signed so that the name of the firm precedes that of the dictator, then "we" is the correct subject. To secure personal emphasis, "I" is sometimes made the subject of letters bearing on semi-personal matters, or written only over the signature of an executive. As has been emphasized in a previous chapter, "I" 's and "we" 's should not be placed frequently at the very beginning of paragraphs, at which strategical points they suggest lack of adjustment to the reader. The exception is the closing paragraph, which is usually designed to stress an idea of import to the writer.

## ILLUSTRATIONS

A

(Faulty)

August 8, 19—.

Michigan Tool Company.  
307 E. Third Street,  
Lansing, Michigan.

Gentlemen:

We have your letter of the 5th, also the parts asked for.

I'm returning in this mail the nozzle that does not fit our type of compressor, as per your instructions.

We tried the new nozzle this morning together with the ball valves. I think there is an improvement in the running of the compressor and believe the nozzle is the right one to use.

We would send you a check for the nozzle in this mail if I knew the amount. Will you please send me the bill as soon as possible so that I can get it in my next bi-monthly report.

I thank you for your attention to our troubles and advice in the matter.

Very truly yours,

DRIPPING SPRINGS MINES COMPANY

Oliver Mull, Supt.

A-1

(Improved)

Gentlemen:

Many thanks for your letter of August 8, and for the compressor parts mentioned in it, which came yesterday.

This morning when we tried the new nozzle and the ball valves, our compressor ran much more smoothly. Though it is yet too early to tell with finality whether this type of nozzle will remedy our trouble, we believe it will do so and shall report to you further in a few days.

If we knew the price of the nozzle, we would pay for it now. At any rate, please send us the bill for it soon so that we may include the amount in our next bi-monthly report.

We certainly appreciate your prompt co-operation in this matter.

Very truly yours,

Passive construction in business letters is usually preferred only when active construction would seem too direct and too personal:

*Too personal:* You have not treated your car right. You must know the bad effects of sun, wind, and rain on a finely painted surface. No wonder, the paint is cracking on your car.

*More tactful:* The cracking of the paint on your car, as described in your recent letter, is no doubt caused by the car's having been exposed for long periods of time to unfavorable weather conditions, especially to intense sunlight.

*Too direct:* Please pay this bill at once.

*More tactful:* An immediate settlement of this bill will certainly be appreciated.

## B. *Clearness*

As soon as the dictator has outlined his letter by paragraphs, he is ready for the actual expression of his ideas. To transmit thought effectively in black on white, the meaning of words used must be clear in the writer's mind before utterance. For, if their meaning is vague and obscure to him, how can he expect it to be otherwise to his reader? Clearness is mainly a matter of combining words correctly and effectively. Obviously, before one can hope to write effective paragraphs one must know how to write effective sentences; and before one can hope to compose effective sentences one must command the exact meanings and varied uses of a reasonably broad vocabulary.

In his everyday dictation the average business man uses a comparatively small stock of words. A number of reasons account for this limitation: the lukewarm interest of the average letter-writer in words and their ways; the stereotyped and ultra-conventional forms into which letters are generally cast; the fear on the part of the correspondent to use words or phrases that might seem "literary." Whereas modern advertisements abound in fresh and clever phrases that tempt the fleeting eye to stop and shop, modern business letters are too often filled with rubber-stamp expressions deadening in their effect.

Ordinarily a business letter is clear when a single reading discloses its full meaning. The more technical the content, the greater the danger of vagueness or obscurity, and therefore the more needful the striving for clarity. Since the average business man's vocabulary is meager, it is advisable to use short and simple rather than long and unfamiliar words.

For a complete study of clearness in writing the reader is referred to standard handbooks of composition, of which there is a large variety. It will suffice here to refresh his mind by presenting a few of the more important rules of clearness.

### CLEARNESS IN THE USE OF WORDS

#### 1. *Know their meaning.*

A few of these goods are satisfactory; the rest [not *balance*] we shall return to you immediately.

The customer is likely [not *liable*] to return the damaged watch.

This payment plan is unique in the history of retailing [not *most unique*].

The firm expects [not *anticipates*] the arrival of several export shipments to-day.

The customer [not *party*] who ordered this service paid cash.

2. *Know their grammatical functions.*

The data for which you asked are [not *is*] enclosed.

Because of [not *due to*] unfavorable business conditions, we could not make prompt payment.

We can [not *can't*] hardly decipher your order.

The firm was bankrupt; its [not *it's*] buildings had been destroyed by fire.

This year our total sales were fewer [not *less*] than last year's.

3. *Know their present standing.*

The board of directors agreed to declare another quarterly dividend; *not* The consensus of opinion among the board of directors was to declare another quarterly dividend.

To appreciate the beauty of these fashionable gowns, you must see them; *not* Words cannot describe the beauty of these fashionable gowns.

We appreciate your letter of August 9, which calls our attention to the quality of lamps shipped you recently; *not* Your favor of the 9th complaining about the quality of the lamps just to hand.

## FAULTY EXPRESSIONS

*Above.* Avoid clumsy and trite adjectival use, as "in the *above* paragraph." Use instead "the *preceding* paragraph," "the *foregoing* paragraph," or "the paragraph *written above*."

*Accept—except.* To *accept* is to take that which is offered. To *except* is to exclude. "He *accepted* the offer of employment." "The statement of the account is correct, errors *excepted*." *Except* (preposition) means "with the exclusion of": "Every employee is subject to a wage cut *except* the office boy."

*Accordance—according.* "In accordance *with* [not *to*] your request." "According *to* [not *with*] your last monthly statement."

*Affect—effect.* To *affect* is to influence. "A general business depression is certain to *affect* profits seriously." The use of *affect* as a noun meaning "affectation" is obsolete. To *effect* is to produce results, to accomplish. "The new manager *effected* many changes in the routine of the office." The noun *effect* signifies result. "The customer's complaint had an immediate *effect*."

*Almost—most.* The use of *most* for *almost* is a barbarism. "*Almost* [not *most*] all our sales are cash sales." "He was *most* fortunate to receive the prize."

*All right.* There is no such word as *alright*.

*Also.* Not sufficiently distinctive to stand at the beginning of a sentence or a paragraph. Use *likewise*, *hence*, *in addition to*, or *as well as*. "*In addition*



[not *also*], we call your attention to the repeated failure of your shipping department to meet our delivery dates."

*All-around—all-round.* The first is incorrect; the second, which is colloquial, means possessing a general capability or excellence. "The performance record of this car is proof of its *all-round* quality."

*Amount.* Too often misused in place of number. "The *number* [not *amount*] of letters written daily is huge."

*And.* With an infinitive, use *to*, not *and*. "Try *to* [not *and*] get these shipments off to us to-day without fail."

*Anticipate.* Frequently used loosely for *expect*. "We *expect* [not *anticipate*] the next shipment to arrive on Thursday. "We anticipated the tactics of our competitors."

*Asset.* Does not mean "anything valuable or useful," but rather an item of property on the left side of the balance-sheet. "Even the office boy is a big *help* [not *asset*] to the new business."

*Balance—rest.* The first word should not be used in place of the second. *Balance* (among other things) stands for the difference between total debits and total credits in an account or in a statement of account. "The *rest* [not *balance*] of the goods due on this order will be shipped you next month."

*Besides.* Means "in addition to, furthermore, moreover." "*Besides*, your prices seem much too high." *Beside* means "by the side of." "In the photograph the treasurer stands *beside* the president."

*Between—among.* When speaking of only two persons or things, use *between*. When speaking of more than two, use *among*. "The legacy was divided *between* the senior partner and the junior partner." "The legacy was divided *among* the three partners."

*But that—but what.* The first phrase means "that not, except that." "I have no doubt *that* [not *but that*] the goods will arrive on time." The second phrase means "*but* (*except*) that which." "We will sign nothing *but what* we want to sign."

*Can—may.* To indicate power or ability use *can*; to indicate permission use *may*. Always use *may* in asking permission. "*May* [not *can*] we ship these goods earlier than your order specifies?" "*May* [not *can*] we serve you in any other way, madam?"

*Cannot help.* After this phrase use a gerund, not an infinitive with *but*. "I *cannot help thinking* [not *but think*] your statement is correct."

*Considerable.* Its use as an adverb or noun is wrong. "The business man was *considerably* [not *considerable*] agitated by the market report." "The bonds paid a *considerable amount of interest* [not *considerable*] during the first two years."

*Continuous—continual.* The first denotes *without stopping*; the second, *frequently repeated*, with stops at intervals. "He worked *continuously* [without rest periods] from 8 A.M. to 4 P.M." "The *continual* [frequently repeated] failure of the engine to operate smoothly prompts us to return it to you for replacement."

*Data.* Being the plural of *datum*, *data* should always be followed by a plural verb. "The data on wholesale prices *are* [not *is*] satisfactory."

*Different.* Should be followed by *from*. "Our advertising policy has always been much *different from* [not *than*] yours."

*Due to.* Use to modify a noun in place of *owing to*, *on account of*, *because of*. Wrong: "His salary was cut due to the depression." Right: "The reduction of his salary was due to the depression."

*Each other.* Used when referring only to two persons. *One another* refers to more than two. "The partners failed to understand *each other*." "The members of the board of directors knew *one another* intimately."

*Effect.* See *Affect*.

*Endorse—approve.* Checks and drafts are endorsed, but not materials other than papers. It should be: "Many prominent artists *recommend* [not *endorse*] this particular piano." "Many prominent artists *approve of* (*regard as good*) this particular piano."

*Enthuse.* Colloquial. "The salesman was very *enthusiastic* [not *enthused*] over the new lines of goods."

*Equally as.* Avoid; omit either *equally* or *as*. "This year's profits are *as* [not *equally as*] great as last year's." "Miller and Brown are *equally* successful business men."

*Except.* See *Accept*.

*Farther—further.* The first word usually refers to distance; the second denotes addition. "We are planning to extend our territory *farther* west." "*Further* correspondence seems useless."

*Fewer.* See *Less*.

*Formally—formerly.* The first word refers to form: "He was *formally* initiated into the fraternity." The second refers to times past: "*Formerly* this firm was a partnership."

*Gentleman, lady.* Not to be used indiscriminately for *man* and *woman*. *Lady* should never be used in direct address: "May I serve you, *madam* [not *lady*]?" "Are you the *man* I met on the train?" "The firm is seeking the service of a *woman* stenographer and three *saleswomen*."

*Hardly.* Means "scarcely." Should not be used with a negative verb. "He could *hardly* [not *couldn't hardly*] understand the long-distance telephone message."

- Its—it's.* The first word is the possessive of *it*; the other is the contraction of *it is*. "*It's* very regrettable that the firm has lost *its* prestige."
- Lady.* See *Gentleman*.
- Lay—lie.* To *lay* means "to cause to *lie*." Its principal parts are: *lay, laid, laid*. *Lie* is intransitive. Its principal parts are: *lie, lay, lain*. "He *laid* the letter on my desk." "The letter *was lying* on my desk."
- Leave—let.* The one should not be used for the other. "Now *leave* the office." "*Let* him have the car this afternoon."
- Less.* Refers to amount, value, degree: "The use of *less* salesmanship is advisable." *Fewer* refers to number: "We shall need *fewer* [not *less*] salesmen on our force next year."
- Liable—likely.* The first is used to suggest an unpleasant probability or possibility: "If you sell short weight, you are *liable* to a fine." *Likely* suggests mere probability: "If you sell all these goods, you are *likely* to make a good profit."
- Loan.* Undesirable as a verb. "The bank *lent* [not *loaned*] the money." "The bank's *loan* was of much help to the firm."
- Lot, lots, a whole lot.* Colloquial; use *much, many, a great deal*. "We'd a *whole lot* rather deal with you than with Smith" should be: "We *much prefer* to deal with you than with Smith." "There are *lots* of people in the same boat as we" should be: "There are many people in the same predicament as we."
- May.* See *Can*.
- Negotiate.* Avoid using this term to mean "overcome a difficulty." "After much time and effort, he managed to *close* [not *negotiate*] the sale." "The yacht *made* [not *negotiated*] the distance in two hours flat."
- Neither—nor.* The correlative conjunction *neither* should always be followed by *nor*, not by *or*: "He found the business *neither* profitable *nor* pleasurable."
- Nice.* Do not use in place of *agreeable* or *pleasant* or *kind*. "The manager was very *courteous* [not *very nice*] to all of us." "Mr. French gave the salesman a *fairly large* [not a *pretty nice*] order this time."
- One another.* See *Each other*.
- Outside of.* Not to be confused with *except for* or *aside from*. "*Aside from* [not *outside of*] the high price, your offer is good."
- Per cent.* Ordinarily written without the period: "Eighty per cent of the customers are women." Not to be confused with the noun *percentage*: "A small *percentage* of the total was deducted."
- Perfect.* Avoid such exaggerations as "The most perfect specimen." "The cream of perfection!" "This garment fits you even more perfectly than that."

*Posted*. Wrongly used for *informed*. "She is well *informed* [not *posted*] about advertising."

*Precede—proceed*. The first one means "to *go before*"; the other, "to *go forward*," or "to *go onward*." "On the way to his room, the guest was *preceded* by the bell-boy." "The firm *proceeded* to establish branches in Italy."

*Principle—principal*. "He was unable to understand the *principle* involved in the solution of the problem." *Principal* may be used either as a noun or as an adjective. "Mr. Frank, *principal* of the school, fell ill." "The *principal* advantage to be derived is personal satisfaction."

*Proposition*. Do not use loosely for *problem*, *proposal*, *task*, *job*, *undertaking*. "That sale was certainly a difficult *task* [not *proposition*]." "What sort of offer [not *what kind of a proposition*] are you prepared to make us?"

*Providing*. A participle, not a conjunction. "We will accept your offer, *provided* [not *providing*] that you pay us cash."

*Real*. Do not use for *very*. "The house is *very* [not *real*] attractive."

*Respectful—respective*. "'*Respectfully* [not *respectively*] yours' is the proper closing salutation of a letter."

*Rest*. See *Balance*.

*Shall—will*. To denote simple futurity, use *shall* in the first person and *will* in the second and third persons:

I *shall* help him.

We *shall* help him.

You *will* help him.

You *will* help him.

He *will* help him.

They *will* help him.

To denote promise, determination, or threat, use *will* in the first, and *shall* in the second and third persons:

I *will* help him.

We *will* help him.

You *shall* help him.

You *shall* help him.

He *shall* help him.

They *shall* help him.

*Should* and *would* follow the same rules as *shall* and *will*.

*Size*. This word, being a noun, should not be used as an adjective. "The different *sized* [not *size*] patterns are all labeled."

*So*. Should not be used in place of *very*: "The customer was *very* [not *so*] angry." When used as a conjunctive adverb meaning *therefore*, *for that reason*, it is preceded by a semicolon, not a comma: "The offer was fair; so he took it."

*Try and*. See *And*.

*Unique*. Since the word means "the only one of its kind," one should not say "fairly unique," "quite unique," "the most unique."

*Clear:*

Further study of your claim #2208 against the N Y N H & H R R, which their freight agent, Mr. G. L. Winlock, asked you on March 4 to withdraw, has proved fruitful. By referring to claim #121927-K, Mr. Winlock will find that the freight rate from Barksdale, Wis., to Kankakee, Ill., is exactly \$1.30. Please write him to this effect.

### *C. Correctness*

Undeniably, correct spelling, grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and sentence construction aid the letter in making an agreeable and uninterrupted impression. Business English that violates established rules runs the risk of turning the reader's attention from the message to the mistakes.

A reputable business house should not risk its standing in the eyes of its customers and friends by writing shoddy letters. Whatever its correspondents' particular deficiencies, they should be taught afresh the business value of good English in letters; and once taught, they should be encouraged to abide by their new resolutions and be helped to work them out in intelligent daily practice.

Errors in grammar, sentence structure, and the like are just as often made by experienced dictators as by greenhorns, especially in the letters of firms that have no correspondence supervisors. Such a situation confronted an Eastern banking house whose newly appointed correspondence critic had a trying time teaching the rudiments of correct English to gray-haired executives with hopelessly fixed writing habits.

Now, regard the matter for a moment from the customer's point of view. Imagine a cultured woman entering Tiffany's and being greeted with: "What can we do for you to-day, lady?" Then think of a similar person getting from this firm a letter the careless English of which proclaims its writer as seriously lacking essential knowledge of English. Unthinkable in the case of Tiffany's with its well-trained personnel? True! Nevertheless much the same happenings occur in many an otherwise high-grade business establishment. The quality of the English used in letters is frequently and directly associated with that of the merchandise or the service which these very same letters are intended to sell. The maintenance of uniformly high standards of correctness in business English should be uppermost in the thought of every self-respecting dictator.

### ILLUSTRATIONS

*Faulty:*

When we have a detailed plan of your home indicating the kind of furniture you desire our service department will be able to make definite suggestions.

- Improved:* If you will send us a detailed plan of your home and a list of the furniture you desire, our service department will gladly make definite suggestions.
- Faulty:* I would like a machine with elite type and will appreciate full price information.
- Improved:* I should like to know the various prices of your machines equipped with elite type.
- Faulty:* Also I am thanking you for your letter, and I am pleasurable anticipating the arrival of the first issue of your valuable magazine.
- Improved:* Thank you also for your letter. I look forward to the pleasure of receiving the first issue of your magazine.
- Faulty:* These are the features of our state fair, which will prove of interest to you, and which should change your mind to exhibit.
- Improved:* Now that we have enumerated the outstanding features of the coming state fair, you will doubtless agree with us that it would be to your advantage to exhibit.

### D. Compactness

One of the best compliments which can be paid any business correspondent is that his letters are compact, that within the narrow limits of a typewritten sheet or two, he has carefully compressed a message clear and complete. Literary writing so-called—a novel or a short story—is usually anything but concise. Some forms of business writing, such as booklets and advertisements, *may* be concise; but the North American business letter, usually consisting of only half a dozen medium-sized paragraphs, should always be concise. Its most desirable, certainly its most businesslike, quality is terseness. By virtue of it, the writer shows the reader ingeniously that he is taking the latter's viewpoint, for he charges with significant meaning every word, phrase, and sentence.

Usually terse writing is thoughtful writing. Months, even years, of patient practice are required to attain a terse and trenchant style. For, in order to supplant a sentence with a phrase, or a phrase with a word and yet not sacrifice one iota of the full meaning—to do this time after time during the day's dictation, one must have at one's tongue's end an excellent vocabulary. Little wonder, then, that compact letters are usually distinctive letters—bearing clearly the impress of a forceful personality.

The old question "How long should a business letter be?" one must always answer with: "Sufficiently long to enable the reader to arrive at a conclusion." Letters having little else to commend them than shortness—the fewest possible words—are the work of lazy or of hurried dictators. Their shortness is akin to curtness—desirable only in cable or telegram. In business correspondence its use speaks of lack of consideration for the reader—of unwillingness to take pains to write fully and, above all, understandingly. Moreover, for the time saved by a dictator whose chief aim is brevity his firm pays dearly later on with injured and lost goodwill. Without exaggeration it may be affirmed that whenever brevity is made the ruling characteristic of a firm's letters, it soon becomes their ruining characteristic. No business, however successful, can withstand for long the good-will-destroying effects of imperious and continued brevity in its written contacts with customers.

A letter is properly compact when its message has been concentrated in a minimum number of plain, well-chosen words aimed to be considerate of the reader's time, brain energy, and feelings. Such a letter is easy to read because of its logical arrangement, easy to understand because of its clear and crisp English, and easy to answer because of its friendly tone. In short, a truly compact letter always fosters better business relations. It contains two elements: the absolutely needful and the relatively needful. The first element comprises the why and wherefore of the letter, as, for instance, the information a customer has asked for; the second element includes the essentials that make for a cordial contact—emphasis on continued good-will and offers of service. Being of equal importance, both elements should appear in every good letter. For, to emphasize once more, the soul of good business writing should not be brevity, but compactness.

When a man living in the country asked a manufacturer for the price of his lawn-mowers and other information concerning them, he received the following answer:

Dear Sir:

Regret to advise in reply to your favor of June 15 that you must have been misinformed. This company has never made or sold hand lawn-mowers. Also, we sell to dealers only.

Very truly yours,

A very poor letter indeed—carelessly written and, of course, not planned at all. It is so brief as to be offensive. It lacks commendable conciseness because of the glaring absence of any service element. Its writer

has made not the slightest effort to help the inquirer. Its whole atmosphere is charged with the thought: "You are all wrong, inquirer. Go away!"

Had the dictator of this missive been a man of some vision and judgment, he might have reasoned thus: "While this man wants something which we cannot supply, it will nevertheless pay us to be friendly and helpful. Who knows? Some day he may be in the market for our machine." The result might have been a letter similar to this one:

Dear Sir:

Since we manufacture only power lawn-mowers, we cannot supply your needs. But if you write either of the following retailers, you will, we are confident, get the desired information quickly:

The Cooper Supply House, 9 Valera St.,  
Marshalltown, Ia.

Iowa Garden Equipment Co., 4 Front St.,  
Marshalltown, Ia.

So that you may become familiar with the Mortensen Power Lawn-Mower, we enclose an illustrated folder. The small size, shown on page 16, is suitable for medium-sized lawns, the other sizes for large lawns.

You, too, would find a Mortensen economical and easy to operate. It cuts close to and around shrubs, flower-beds, and other obstructions without damaging their edges; and the incidental benefit which your lawn receives from the gentle rolling of the Mortensen is very much worth while.

Please write us further if we can be of service to you.

Yours very truly,

### ADDITIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS

*Not  
concise:*

We would be glad to build you a boat of this kind, but from your letter we would infer that you could not wait for so long a period of time as it would ordinarily take to build one, as you say that the season has already begun out on the West Coast.

*Improved:*

We should be glad to build a boat of this kind for you and could have it ready shortly after the opening of your season.

*Not  
concise:*

We have on hand at the present time several carloads of 50 gallon vinegar barrels that we would like to offer you.



*Improved:*

Since you have in the past purchased from us 50-gallon vinegar barrels but have not ordered any recently, may we call to your attention several carloads which we have just received?

These barrels are not only freshly emptied and in excellent condition throughout, but they are priced at 10% below the current figure. At this attractive rate our supply will soon be gone. If you have no immediate use for them, it would pay you to store them, since even on a small order you would save a considerable amount.

### Incisive Diction

To move the reader to agreeable and mutually profitable action is the primary purpose of all business English. This action may be indirect, as in answers to requests for information; or it may be direct, as in application, collection, and sales letters. But whether indirect or direct, this highly competitive appeal for business should be clothed with incisive diction tending to replace vagueness, doubt, and wavering with clarity, confidence, and appropriate action.

#### A. *Simplicity*

In business English, words serve not so much to heighten the writer's style—to further projection of the self—as to establish quick and understanding communication. Whereas the value of a literary masterpiece lies in the finesse of expression, that of a masterpiece of business writing lies in the depth of impression.

In view of the fact that the average business man deals with everyday folk of ordinary intelligence and education, and that quick and direct response is his wish, he must necessarily use English that will be clearly understood even by the simplest mind. Adjustment to the reader's language level is the *sine qua non* of all effective business writing, even though it may entail a lowering of writing standards, which, by the way, is often more difficult than painful. Carpenters and caretakers respond to an English more jaunty than that which moves cardinals and college professors. Nothing is more fatal to the success of an ordinary business letter than to couch it in English that is beyond the reader's mental depth, though it must be granted that sometimes such diction serves as flattery. R.S.V.P. might carry much meaning on an invitation to a fashion tea extended by an exclusive modiste; on an invitation addressed to the customer of the dollar-down-dollar-a-week store below Main Street it would probably mean no more than a Chinese crossword puzzle.

The English of commerce has ever been characterized by a broad

simplicity. Plain and reasonably short words are used ten times as often as pretentious and long words. The business writer reasons that, the simpler an expression, the more familiar will its meaning be, the more direct its appeal, and the more acute its impression. That in this direction he has gone to extremes is regrettably true. The letters written by men in business fifty or even 100 years ago testify to a word wealth far greater than that found in to-day's correspondence. But, of course, in those more or less leisurely days the strain of competition was not so telling and business was frequently combined with pleasure and other private affairs. At any rate, plain one- or two-syllable words can be relied on to promote quick understanding. Thus, most correspondents would probably prefer:

clearness	to	perspicuity
increase	to	augment
indisputable	to	incontrovertible
letter	to	communication
pay	to	remuneration
position	to	situation
quit	to	resign
save	to	put by
receipt	to	reception
trade	to	exchange

Further than that, we avoid wordiness and a certain pomposity by relying on the more common and direct expressions. Instead of "The correspondent was by nature averse to using the dictaphone," we say "The correspondent always disliked [or "naturally hated"] to use the dictaphone." We plead, "Please pay soon" or "Please send us a check soon" rather than "Please favor us with a remittance in the not too distant future." "You have perhaps never seen a greater variety of styles in men's suits" is stronger business English than "You have never laid eyes on [or "beheld"] a more extensive array of gentlemen's suitings."

Because simple and reasonably short sentences can be read and understood more easily than involved and long ones, the use of these time-savers should, to a judicious extent, be favored:

*Long and rambling:*      May we suggest that you call at the office, preferably by telephone appointment, and we will be glad to talk with you, and if you will do this, we believe you will be much better satisfied than you will with information we can give you in a letter of this kind.

*More direct:*              Since we can give you this information much better in person than by letter, please telephone for an appointment.

## B. *Definiteness*

A clear and lasting impression results from exact writing. To leave just such impressions is the aim of every business letter. As a matter of fact, comparatively few achieve it; most business letters are filled with general terms, the lazy dictator's stand-bys, which at best give rise only to hazy, and not infrequently confusing, images. Definiteness in writing implies singleness of aim and singleness of expression. Know specifically the thought you wish to convey; then clothe it in words that fit it exactly, which means words neither too large nor too small.

The banker who dictated the following paragraph does not know what sharpshooting in writing really is.

As we are informed that you are coming to our city in the near future to become associated with our good college, we are taking the liberty of writing you to offer the services of our institution and to extend to you an invitation to make our institution your banking home.

By the time the reader has floundered through such a forest of words as this, he wonders where and what the trees are. He is overwhelmed with words, but none has left a distinct impression. How much more would this writer have accomplished had he simply and naturally said:

Since you will soon be associated with McMines College as football coach, we welcome you to Pleasant Hope and invite you to make the Citizens' Savings Bank your bank.

## FURTHER ILLUSTRATIONS

*Indefinite:*        The business man who has sold our washing-machine during the past year, has had a great advantage over his competitor.

*Definite:*        The dealer who has made a leader of Two-Minute Washers during the past year has satisfied more customers and pocketed more profits than his competitor.

## C. *Imaginativeness*

The appeal to the imagination has ever been proclaimed by the business man to be one of his most productive promoters. By means of it he has subtly tempted many a prospective customer, and has then shaped that customer's desires and tastes into specific, regular, and profitable buying habits.

The advertising pages of our newspapers and periodicals superabound in such appeals—as if there were no limit to man's desire for things and services. Here comes to mind the story of a leading artist whom a manufacturer commissioned to paint, solely for purposes of illustrating an advertisement, a bathroom such as he (the artist) would wish. His creative imagination soon produced the bathroom. In due time its likeness graced an advertising page in a well-known national weekly where its charm stopped many a glancer's eye. But when it caught the fancy of a millionaire he longed to own just such a luxuriously appointed bathroom. And being told by the firm's advertising manager that in reality there was no such bathroom, he forthwith ordered one made! What the artist—be he painter, poet, or writer—visualizes to-day is often common property to-morrow. Ten or more years ago a man sitting in front of a crude radio outfit, strained his ears to catch the faint sounds emerging from the first cumbersome broadcasting station. To-day as a passenger on a crack train, he may speak with his business associate in London by telephone while traveling at the rate of fifty miles an hour. When John Patterson held a convention at Dayton for thousands of employees, he placed a huge electric sign on the city's largest building. It read: "Think!" He wanted his men to reflect, for he realized that progress and more business lay in that gold-mine, the imagination.

In its simplest form imagination is the recalling of images stored up in the mind. It is creative when it combines these images and facts of experience into new forms—new pictures, books, and inventions.

Business letters that are the result of much thought, that are enlivened with the sparkle of imagination, get prompt attention. Imaginative writing makes the recipient *see* and *feel* the things that interest him. By means of deft phrases its creator transforms a prosaic thing into one that beautifies and charms, one that yields health, comfort, and pleasure.

Hence the practical value of imagination to the business correspondent lies in the broader conception of writing which it affords him, in richer and more pointed phrases which it gives him, in the greater and more lifelike detail which it suggests. All of these advantages the correspondent combines to make his English worthy of undivided and unhurried attention. It is needless to add that truly imaginative writing is unblemished by humdrum and trite expressions.

## ILLUSTRATIONS

*The humdrum way*

You will save money  
by buying Durble coal  
now.

Replying to your favor of the 6th inst., I have pleasure in enclosing herewith a little descriptive literature of the Chateau Canadien, all of which, I trust, will prove of interest.

*The appealing way*

You can stop rising fuel costs with Durble coal. A load of Durble coal in your bin now is a load of worry off your mind.

Please glance over the enclosed printed story of the Chateau Canadien. In a moment or two you will know the fascinating history of this unique French-Canadian Hotel atop Old Quebec. And long before you're through, you, too, will wish to taste its famous cuisine and to linger in its charmingly appointed rooms.

*D. Friendly Tone and Spirit*

Suggestion as used in business letters should give rise to pleasurable thought associations—should call up in the reader's mind enjoyable and beneficial experiences. Human nature much more readily and willingly responds to the appeal that promises pleasure in some form than to the appeal that brings pain. Only when it is desired to impress a person's sense of fear are we justified in using negative suggestion. Even then it should be used cautiously. To their great profit, life insurance companies have learned that it does not pay to frighten prospects into buying insurance policies. After a long time they found that most people do not want life insurance if in order to benefit from it they have to die. As a consequence, to-day's advertising of life insurance emphasizes health, longer life, and old age free from financial worry. Even most of the horribly negative patent medicine appeals showing human faces twisted in acute agony have been replaced with saner and pleasanter messages. In short, the tendency in modern business is to employ constructive, pleasant suggestion wherever possible.

*Boastful letters are negative.* They create a feeling of suspicion and distrust. They destroy good-will by removing confidence. The frequent use of superlatives in letters marks the writer as an egotist whose creed is "God, I thank thee that my goods are not as other men's." Too often there is no truth behind his generalities. Moreover, their generous use in

*Ill-con-  
trived:*

Please understand that when we sell anything, we expect the cash for it and we don't ship out any dogs until we receive the cash for them. That is the only way we do business, so don't ask us to ship you C.O.D., for we don't know you and for all we know you may never call for the shipment. We haven't time to look up all our customers, so we sell for cash only.

*Positive:*

One important reason for our attractive prices is our cash-in-advance selling plan. It saves us much money which we would otherwise have to spend in obtaining credit information on our customers and in keeping their accounts. This substantial saving we pass on to you in the form of lower prices. Moreover, we guarantee satisfaction or refund your purchase price minus express charges.

## The Flavor of Personality

To achieve a distinctive style is the heart's desire of every serious writer. Whether this quality of qualities be called personality, individuality, style, character, or flavor, it has clearly two outstanding traits: intangibility and elusiveness. Being exceedingly intangible, character in writing is not easy to define precisely, and being likewise exceedingly elusive, it is not easy to corral. Perhaps to-morrow your eyes feast on a placid, far-away mountain lake, fringed by tall, resinous pines, their deep, long shadows gently caressing blue-black waters. You are spellbound by the atmosphere, the inherent character of the whole setting—the harmony of line, the blending of color, the rhythm of light and water, the melody of sound, and the fragrance of mountain air. These and many other intangibles a master craftsman has blended to endow the scene for you with an unforgettable, majestic individuality. Similar it is with writing that projects a strong and agreeable personality. Into it a craftsman has poured many intangibles— noble thoughts and the spirit of his innermost being that they may ~~harden~~ <sup>harden</sup> hundred souls who chance to read it.

Gifted writers there are whose personalities illumine every line of their matchless work—Goethe, Voltaire, Shakespeare. But they are the favored few, the geniuses. To the common multitude of writers the development of a distinctive style is a toilsome, lifelong task, not to be discharged according to set rules. Style is not to be achieved through the use of texts or set courses in composition, however helpful these are. Style cannot be standardized. Let no aspiring writer imagine he can master it in twelve lessons or in twelve months.

Business writing flavored with individuality is rare. The average correspondent is hedged in by foolish conventions. Moreover, to him

Or: We have made the careful search you requested in your telephone call of this morning.

3. *At all times*. Excessively used. Usually meaningless and unnecessary. Use *always* instead.

Weak: The writer will *at all times* take the greatest of pleasure in being presented with future opportunities of serving you.

Better: I shall always welcome opportunities of serving you.

4. *At an early date, at your earliest convenience*. Hackneyed and unnatural. Often entirely unnecessary. If time element is an important factor, refer to it in a more definite and natural way.

Weak: Naturally we are anxious to know what you think of this proposition and will therefore appreciate a line from you *at an early date*.

Better: Naturally, we are desirous of knowing what you think of this proposal, and shall therefore appreciate your writing us immediately upon receipt of this letter.

Or: Won't you drop us a line upon receipt of this letter, giving us your opinion on this matter? We shall appreciate it.

Weak: In view of the fact that the enclosed bill is now two months past due, we would ask that you remit *at your earliest convenience*.

Better: Since the enclosed bill is now two months past due, we must ask you to remit now.

5. *At this time*. Superfluous in most cases. Where necessary to complete meaning of sentence, use *now* or *at present* instead.

Weak: We have nothing to offer you *at this time* and of course are not in a position to make any arrangements regarding our needs for the coming spring *at this time*.

Better: We have nothing to offer now and of course are not at present in a position to arrange for our needs of the coming spring.

6. *And oblige*. Smacks of servility. Needless at the end of a letter.

Weak: Kindly have money order sent for this amount, *and oblige*.

Better: We shall appreciate your sending us a money order for this amount.

7. *Beg*. Has no justification in business writing. Avoid using *beg* in these and similar connections: beg to acknowledge, beg to advise, beg to inform, beg to state, beg to remain.

Weak: We await your valued orders, and *beg* to remain.

Better: We shall appreciate future orders from you, which, we assure you, will have our personal attention.

14. *Favor*. Use the word *favor* only when it implies that a kindness has been done or a courtesy extended. Do not use *favor* in place of *letter*.

Weak: Acknowledging your esteemed *favor* of recent date, we beg to state . . .

Better: We are glad to say in answer to your letter of August 8 . . .

15. *Handing you*. Out of date. Say "send you."

Weak: I am *handing you* herewith letter from the Miller Lumber Company.

Better: I am sending you herewith a letter from the Miller Lumber Company.

Or: I am enclosing a letter from the Miller Lumber Company.

16. *Have before us*. A pet and stock expression. Wordy and formal.

Weak: We *have before us* your valued favor of recent date.

Better: Thank you for your good letter of May 13.

17. *Hereto*. In the phrase *attached hereto*. Used in this connection, *to attach* means "to fasten to this letter." *Hereto* is unnecessary and should be omitted.

Weak: Answering your favor of June 21st, regarding copies of advertising circulars, would state that we are attaching *hereto* several of our latest circulars.

Better: In answer to your letter of June 21, we are pleased to attach several of our latest advertising circulars.

18. *Herewith*. Omit when used in connection with *enclose*. *Enclose* means "put within an envelope," and it already includes the idea of *herewith*.

Weak: We are enclosing *herewith* some of our advertising literature.

Better: We are enclosing some of our advertising literature.

19. *House organ*. Formal and rather indefinite. This phrase is passing out of use and giving way to the more expressive *house paper* or *house magazine*.

Weak: The March issue of *Coöperation*, our *house organ*, is being mailed you under separate cover to-day.

Better: We are sending you to-day under another cover the March issue of *Coöperation*, our house magazine.

20. *Inst.* Abbreviation of *instant*, not *instance*. *Inst.* is no longer used to indicate the day of the month. Be specific, name the exact date.

Weak: We have your favor of the 9th *inst.*, and are also in receipt of your catalogue.

Better: Thank you for your letter of July 9, and also for your catalogue.



21. *Kind*. Smacks of servile flattery when used in such phrases as *your kind order*, *your very kind letter*, etc. If a favor has been granted, express appreciation in a more definite and straightforward manner.

Weak: It is a pleasure indeed to have *your very kind letter* of the 12th.

Better: We are glad indeed to have your letter of June 12.

Or: We appreciate your good letter of June 12.

22. *Line*. Used indiscriminately to mean almost anything. It should not be used in place of *business*, or of *line of goods*.

Weak: Our Mr. Johnson will have our *line* on display at the American Hotel every Monday and Wednesday during the season.

Better: Mr. Johnson, our representative, will display our line of goods at the American Hotel every Monday and Wednesday during the season.

23. *Our Mr. Miller*. This expression, generally used to refer to a salesman, lacks refinement. Say simply "Mr. Miller" or "our representative, Mr. Miller."

Weak: You are advised that *our Mr. Miller* will have our line on display at the Stewart Hotel in Spokane every Monday and Wednesday during the season.

Better: We are glad to say that Mr. Miller, our representative, will display our complete line of goods at the Stewart Hotel in Spokane every Monday and Wednesday during the season.

24. *Party*. The use of *party* for *person* in business correspondence is incorrect. Only in legal writing and in telephone exchange should the word *party* be used to mean a person.

Weak: If you know of a *party* that would be interested in this proposition, please let me know at once.

Better: If you know of any one who would be interested in this offer, please let me know at once.

25. *Proposition*. Excessively and aimlessly used. It means "that which is proposed, that which is offered, as for consideration, a proposal, an offer of terms."

Weak: Our *proposition* is to offer a discount not on rebuilt houses, but only on new ones.

Better: Our plan is to offer a discount not on rebuilt houses, but only on new ones.

26. *Prox*. Abbreviation of the Latin word *proximo*, meaning "on the next." No longer used to indicate the next month. Avoid misunderstanding by giving the exact name of the month. (See also *Inst.*)

Weak: The State conference of the Indiana B-B Club scheduled to meet on the 5th *prox.* is the first important conference of its kind to be held in Indianapolis.

Better: The state conference of the Indiana B-B Club, scheduled to meet on July 5, is the first important conference of its kind to be held in Indianapolis.

27. *Recent date.* Unbusinesslike and indefinite. Be specific and give exact date.

Weak: We are to-day in receipt of your communication of *recent date*, inquiring as to the cost of Easy-Hatch Incubators.

Better: Thank you very much for your inquiry of February 20, regarding the cost of Easy-Hatch Incubators.

28. *Same.* Excessively and incorrectly used as a pronoun in business letters. Use *it*, *they*, or *them* instead.

Weak: Regret to say we are obliged to make up order first, but will give *same* our best attention.

Better: We regret to say that we are obliged to make up your order first, but assure you that we will give it our earnest attention.

29. *State.* Cold and formal. Use *say* or *tell*.

Weak: Beg to *state* in answer to your favor of April 9th, that we are taking the matter of special discounts up with our sales department and that we will write you again soon.

Better: We are pleased to say, in reply to your letter of April 9, that we are taking up the matter of special discounts with our Sales Department, and that you will hear from us within the next few days.

30. *Take pleasure.* Often formal and awkward. Say "we are glad" or "we are pleased."

Weak: Your inquiry of the 7th inst. received and we *take pleasure* in replying herewith.

Better: We are glad to answer your inquiry of March 7.

31. *Thanking you in advance.* A phrase generally used at the end of letters in which a favor is asked. It is discourteous in that its use presumes the granting of the favor. Moreover, it implies that the writer will not write a letter of thanks after the courtesy has been extended to him.

Weak: I hope to receive your catalogue by return mail. *Thanking you in advance* for this favor, I am.

Better: I shall appreciate your sending me your catalogue by return mail.

32. *To hand.* No longer used. Use the correct form of the verb *to receive* instead.

Weak: Your favor of the 8th inst., informing us that our shipment of the 27th ult. has never been received by you, has just come *to hand*.

Better: We thank you for your letter of June 8, informing us that you never received our shipment of May 27.

33. *Ult.* Abbreviation of the Latin word *ultimo*, meaning the last month preceding the present. Out of date in business letters.

Weak: We have your letter of the 21st *ult.*, which by the way must have been delayed in the mails for it reached us only yesterday, March 5.

Better: We have just received your letter of February 21, which must have been delayed in the mails, for it reached us only yesterday, March 5.

34. *Under separate cover.* Indefinite and wordy. It is much better to state definitely the means and mode of sending or shipping that which cannot be enclosed.

Weak: Complying with your request of April 27th, we are to-day sending you *under separate cover* the last five issues of *The International World*.

Better: In compliance with your request of April 27, we are sending you to-day by parcel post the last five issues of *The International World*.

35. *Valued, esteemed.* Avoid the use of either in such phrases as *valued order, esteemed favor, etc.*, which are trite and out of date. Express appreciation of courtesies afforded or favors granted in a more straightforward and original way.

Weak: Your *valued* order of Jan. 7 for One Busy Boy, 5 HP. Gas Engine has just been received and will receive our prompt attention.

Better: Thank you very much for your order of January 7, for one Busy Boy 5 h.p. gas engine. We will give it our personal attention.

Weak: Replying to yours of the 19th *will say* we are enclosing our latest general price list together with other printed matter.

Better: In response to your letter of April 19, we are pleased to enclose our latest general price list together with other printed matter.

38. *Writer*. Artificial and formal when used in place of direct personal reference, and for no specific reason. Its use at times is justified in letters of application where too many "I"'s would detract attention from the message.

Weak: Your letter of the 22nd ult. reached this office during the absence of the *writer*.

Better: Your letter of November 22 reached this office during my absence.

39. *You people*. Impolite and vulgar. Omit *people*, which is entirely unnecessary.

Weak: If *you people* know of a party that would be interested in this proposition as a cash buyer, I will pay 2% commission.

Better: If you know of any one who might be interested in this offer as a cash buyer, I will pay you 2% commission.

## OBJECTIONABLE CONSTRUCTIONS

### 1. *Omission of essential words.*

- a. The subject of the sentence, when a pronoun, is often omitted. Such an omission not only results in an incomplete sentence, but it also makes the tone of the letter curt and impolite.

Weak: *Have yours* of April 20th and *note you* are desirous of obtaining information concerning our house organ.

Better: We have received your letter of April 20, indicating your desire to obtain information with regard to our house paper.

- b. Omission of the word *letter*. The word *yours* is frequently incorrectly used for *your letter*, as in the first example given above. At best *yours* is very indefinite.

- c. Necessary words of the predicate or verb of the sentence are often omitted.

Weak: *We have* your letter of April 20 which indicates that you are desirous of obtaining information.

Better: We have received your letter of April 20 which indicates. . .

2. *Participial construction*. Avoid the use of participial construction in important positions—the opening and closing sentences of a letter. It is one of the weakest constructions in the English language.

Weak: *Replying to your favor of the 24th inst., beg to state that your order for brushes was shipped on the 21st inst.*

Better: In reply to your letter of January 24, we are glad to inform you that your order for brushes was shipped by express on January 21.

Weak: *Trusting that we may have the pleasure of serving you in the future, we are. . .*

Better: We trust that we may have the pleasure of serving you in the future.

3. *Passive construction.* Often used indiscriminately in place of active construction. It robs the sentence and letter of personal touch and character. Use passive construction when you have a good reason for wanting to be impersonal.

Weak: *Our assistance will gladly be given to you on the lines solicited in your letter of January 20th.*

Better: We shall be very glad to assist you in the matter outlined in your letter of January 20.

Weak: *Replying to yours of May 4th, will say that your inquiry is very much appreciated.*

Better: We appreciate your inquiry of May 4.

The fuller the dictator's stock of words, the richer his style. The surest way of acquiring a good working vocabulary is to read regularly, widely, and, above all, critically. Too much of our reading to-day is hurried and ill-chosen. Unfamiliar words are passed by as if they were a plague. In our senseless anxiety to get at the gist of the story, we fail to see the writer's personality.

If you would cultivate style in writing, then read good books at least twice: once for the story, and a second time for the style. Study the author's methods of fashioning phrases into sentences and sentences into paragraphs. Unconsciously you will enlarge your own vocabulary and extend its usefulness. Furthermore, stock your book-shelf with up-to-date dictionaries and books of synonyms. The business correspondent's desk on which or in which may be found a book of synonyms, the expert writer's indispensable tool, is rare indeed.

Usually, the more spontaneous business writing is, the more personality it shows. Too many letter-writers are afraid to reveal their selves in black on white, to let themselves go. Moreover, business, the relentless leveler, has machined their style to a nicety. And yet in their personal contacts and in their private letters, these same men often exhibit a refreshing originality that bespeaks pleasing personalities. If they would only remember

that business writing should not conform to the well-known and well-worn pattern! If they would only inject into their writing some of the spontaneousness characteristic of their social correspondence and of the friendly, informal conversations they hold with others, how quickly their letters would improve!

The following letter breathes forth a delightful, fresh air. It was received by a hotel manager who had asked a guest if the service rendered was really satisfactory.

With reference to your courteous note of to-day, I am happy to say that your request is already granted with alacrity and pleasure.

In point of fact, if the good service which I have already received in the brief time I have been here is maintained, you will in addition receive my gratitude.

As an instance, I turned my laundry in at 8:30 this morning. At 4 o'clock this afternoon it was back in my room, and all well laundered. This is only typical of the service I have thus far received.

People are prone to register complaints. How few of us ever file an appreciation of good and efficient service. Let me be one of these.

Yours in the same spirit in which you wrote me  
—a believer in reciprocity.

A salesman decked out like a low comedian or like a fashion-plate is handicapped at the very start. His manner of dress suggests a vapid state of mind not conducive to serious business. Style in good business writing does not vaunt itself. Observe the flippant strutting in these lines:

Right here's the report you asked me to write for your valuable publication on the above subject.

Doggone, I'm duly complimented, but it's one thing to write business letters and quite another to write for publication. The latter requires literary talent, while the former demands only good horse sense. 'Tennyrate, I've done my double darndest. Let your readers be the jury.

Similarly, a letter which boasts many gilded phrases arouses suspicion. It smacks too much of insincerity. It does not conform to accepted standards of business communication. The same holds of too clever letters.

They are not to be recommended for general use. They disclose too much artificiality and straining for effect. The average business man is not only not clever, but he also frequently fails to recognize real cleverness, interpreting it as a stupid stunt to get his attention at any cost.

The following letter was written on social stationery and delivered to the rooms in a large hotel:

Dear Mr. Barrington:

Pardon my intrusion—

I am Miss Rainier Lime Rickey from California, and seeing your name on the hotel register, thought I'd drop in and get acquainted.

You will find me highly carbonated, healthful and refreshing, and a good mixer. If you care to, give me a ring, before you leave town, or better still, page me through room service.

There are dozens just like me to join you at any time; just put in a call, but be sure to insist on getting me personally, as I am the talk of the town, the life of any party, and very much in demand.

Excuse me, please, as I hear my cracked friend, Mr. Ice, coming down the hall.

Yours for any party,

Miss Rainier Lime Rickey

Don't show this to your wife.

Character in business letters, as manifested by their tone, may be sprightly, at times even breezy; it may be conservative and dignified. Its use varies with the nature of the business, the caliber of the men that operate it, and the general impression they wish these silent salesmen to make. A letter summoning the members of an advertising club to a meeting may very appropriately be breezy. Many advertising men like that sort of approach: it flatters them. A sales manager's appeal urging his men to fight harder for business may well be brisk—filled with vigorous enthusiasm. A banker's letter painstakingly setting forth the various reasons why his patrons should have their wills drawn is best couched in conservative, confidence-inspiring phrases. Finally, a high-class jeweler's letter might be very formal and dignified.

Long-established, well-known businesses headed by older men almost invariably write conservative letters to create the impression of solidity

and stability. More recently founded businesses, on the other hand, especially those managed by "go-getters," put much vigor into their writing to give an impression of themselves as having great vitality.

Furthermore, as advertising, sales, credit, adjustment, and general service policies are actually carried out, they tend clearly to establish business character in the patrons' eyes as being backward or modern, coercive or coöperative, superficial or solid, cold or cordial. And since what is written is, by force of habit and convention, regarded with more importance than what is spoken, the many letters which a firm despatches each day become a fruitful or a fruitless expression of its composite character.

Note how Jack Carr, in one of his "Cordial Contacts," which is addressed to dealers, creates character definitely by means of a sprightly tone:

Ever since Helen of Troy  
Invented Plaster of Paris—  
folks have been susceptible to impressions.

For years there has been a general impression that  
everybody goes away for the summer and business  
goes to helentirely.

There's no more truth in this idea than there is in  
the popular notion that Huckleberry Finn was a  
fruit peddler.

The bluebird of business is just around the corner  
from you—in summer as well as in winter. A little  
imagination and a little perspiration will keep  
your sales climbing with the thermometer.

Feature Fans right now!

An attractive window display, using G-E material,  
which we'll gladly furnish, will serve to support  
the national G-E advertising.

G-E Fans have become as widely known as the famous  
Wiring System. Factories, offices, homes, every  
place of business is a prospect.

You tell them—the balmy breeze of a bathing beach  
at a THIRD OF A CENT per hour (cost of running a  
9-inch G-E Fan).

Feature G-E Fans right now!

And check over your stock to-day. When the heat  
wave hits, the demand will be heavy.

On the other hand, the following writing is marked by a simple dignity which suggests a conservative, and in this case very considerate, writer:



Dear Mrs. Deal:

We should like very much to use the poem you have sent us, but our advertising policy does not allow us to use material of this nature.

It is kind of you to write us and to give us this opportunity, and we appreciate it.

Some years ago we used rhymes. However, that custom has been abandoned and the rhymes have been replaced by more modern forms of advertising. Styles in advertising change quite rapidly.

We want to thank you for sending the poem to us, and for your appreciation of Purity Soap. By another post we are sending you a recipe book, which we hope you will enjoy reading and using.

Very truly yours,

Have you ever tried Purity Soap Powder for laundering dainty things? We are sending you a sample to try.

Usually a business firm that has a settled correspondence policy lets the individual dictator put his own personality into his letters, specifying only that its expression be suited to the firm's aims and standards. In other words, the language in which a business letter is couched is the dictator's own. In some instances the correspondent is more or less restricted to the use of form paragraphs and form letters, whether or not they were prepared by him. Furthermore, many firms furnish their dictators and stenographers with lists of objectionable phrases which must not appear in their letters. As a whole, this represents the extent to which the individual dictator's projection of personality is usually controlled, assuming, of course, that he can write good English.

When, however, it comes to the letter's suggesting a firm's character by its physical appearance, much effort is made to secure uniformity. Most firms want *all* their letters to be dressed neatly. They therefore prescribe that all dictators use the same kind of stationery, the same size of type, color of ribbon, length of indentation and line, the same spacing between lines and paragraphs, width of margins, form of heading, opening and closing salutations, and signature. So-called model letters and style sheets are placed at the disposal of all stenographers and typists with instructions to follow their provisions precisely. Such control of the letter's dress has, in view of the common temptation of dictator and stenographer to indulge in fads, a sobering and stabilizing effect on their work. Most important

of all, it leaves the dictator free to place the force of his personality where it belongs—into the “mental” part of the letter, its message.

Presumably, a uniformly tidy and standardized mechanical arrangement of the letter has a certain advertising value to the user. Like soldiers in trim uniform, his letters are easily and quickly recognized and perhaps on this score given preferential consideration.

### Starts and Stops

Exceptional attention-value attaches to the first and the last paragraph of a business letter, which advantage should be capitalized to the fullest extent. The function of the beginning paragraph is to attract favorable attention and to tempt the reader to dip deeper into the letter. Under no condition should a flabby opening be used which merely acknowledges receipt of a previous letter and so foregoes an excellent opportunity to make a strong first impression. To be really effective, the initial paragraph of most routine letters should meet the following requirements:

1. It should specifically refer to the subject of the letter.
2. It should definitely acknowledge previous correspondence.
3. It should express appropriate sentiment.
4. It should be reasonably short.
5. It should not begin with participial construction, and should avoid all trite expressions.
6. It should preferably subordinate the writer's to the reader's viewpoint.

Specific reference to the subject-matter in the opening paragraph saves the reader time by enabling him immediately to gauge the import of the entire message, to classify, so to say, the letter. The practice of making this reference purely mechanical by placing above the message proper such legends as “Your letter August 2—Order #8745,” “Subject: Claim #2847,” or “In reply refer to FC/V,” is no longer popular, even though some railroad companies still use it to some extent. Since the subject of the letter is broached in the beginning anyhow, little is saved by using these legends, which mar the appearance of the letter noticeably.

Prompt and precise acknowledgment of prior correspondence is a matter of business courtesy and expediency. It is especially desirable in transactions which require a number of letters for their completion, and also in cases where two correspondents write each other frequently on various topics. Instead of devoting the entire opening paragraph to such

acknowledgment, it is much better practice to weave the acknowledgment in with the statement of the subject-matter.

A good salesman is always careful to introduce his presence and his talk with a few short and seasonable remarks. He does not burst in upon prospect or customer with utter disregard for the simple amenities of social intercourse. Why, then, should not the letter, the silent salesman, express the equivalent of a cordial handshake and a cheery "Good morning, Mr. Richardson, how are you to-day?" or whatever greeting the occasion may demand? Expressions such as "Thank you very much for your interest," "We certainly appreciate your position in this matter," and "We are indeed sorry the shipment of your order had to be postponed" start the letter off with a bit of human warmth that is likely to be reciprocated.

Effectual openings are almost invariably short, occupying but a few lines. Their very brevity gives them the impression of being easy to read. It invites prompt and agreeable attention. The sentences composing the paragraph should also be reasonably short. It is better to use two or more sentences than to compress the entire thought of the initial paragraph into one long and more or less involved sentence.

Dictators too lazy to outline their letters or just simply stuck in a rut generally start off with participial construction—replying, acknowledging, referring—which they then follow with many clichés. They forget entirely that important thoughts in important positions demand the use of natural, fresh phrases set in forceful sentences. They should remember that since one of the main functions of the opening is to reduce to a minimum the time required to read and to understand it, it is very poor policy to place clumsy rubber-stamps in the reader's way.

The ideal opening gets immediately in step with the reader. This need is met by avoiding the use of "I" or "we" as much as possible at the beginning, where it may color egotistically the tone of the entire letter. Thoughtful subordination of the writer's to the reader's standpoint should be the guiding aim in beginning a letter. Fads, such as starting every letter off with "Good Morning," are of course not good form, especially since the letter may arrive late in the afternoon.

## 14 ILLUSTRATIONS

*Bad:* We are seeking some information regarding radio programs on the enclosed questionnaire.

27734

*Better:* You can materially aid us in preparing more entertaining radio programs by answering the enclosed questionnaire.

*Bad:* Answering your esteemed favor which seems to have no date, I am sending you our complete catalogue.

*Better:* You will doubtless find many interesting bargains in our latest fall and winter catalogue, which we are sending you to-day, in response to your recent request.

The closing sentence of a letter is seen and read last. It makes the last impression on the reader and often lingers longer in his memory than does any other part of the letter. The business letter should end with a statement of importance *to the writer*. It may be that this will consist merely of an expression of courtesy to show appreciation of favors granted, or orders given, or it may be that it is in effect an important suggestion to induce the reader to take the action which the writer wishes him to take, such as granting an interview, signing an order blank, mailing a card, or calling a telephone number. Whatever the nature of the thought expressed in the closing sentence of the business letter, it should, on the one hand, be important because of the attention-receiving position of the last sentence on the letter-sheet; on the other hand, it should be expressed in language so well chosen as to make the important thought in the important position attractively and enduringly impressive. To gain this end the use of participial construction and of stock phrases should be carefully avoided in last sentences for reasons which have already been stated. In other words, a business letter should end in a natural and positive way without unnecessary and meaningless phraseology.

### ILLUSTRATIONS

*Bad:* Assuring you of our desire to co-operate in this, we would ask you to wait with settlement until our N. Y. Office has made a thorough investigation.

*Better:* Please hold this matter in abeyance until our New York Office has had an opportunity to look into it.

*Bad:* Trusting this information is satisfactory and that we can serve you in some other way, we are....

*Better:* May we serve you in any other way?

## PROBLEMS

1. State what is wrong with the following sentences or paragraphs; then rewrite them:
  - (a) Many articles describing in detail the various displays appearing at the exposition will appear in many newspapers and magazines throughout the country which will be the best advertising your company could receive for its various products.
  - (b) The public failing to see your firm's name any longer advertised in our trade paper would probably assume that it has gone broke or that some change has been made, which would cause them to feel that the firm is not as dependable as it was before and their attention would be turned to other firms and products.
  - (c) At these informal meetings the commerce students are able to ask questions and also to hear the personal experiences of practical business men who know the ropes.
  - (d) Upon careful investigation we discovered that your failure to receive the quality of goods ordered was due to a mistake made in our shipping offices during the heavy Xmas rush which inundated us.
  - (e) We recommend these firms to you for two reasons, they market a perfect product and they are located much nearer to your city than any others we would recommend and both of them engage in export trade and shall no doubt be pleased to negotiate with you.
  - (f) We appreciate immensely your desire to do business with us. We are sending you our latest catalogue of gas engines. We regret we cannot give you a special discount on the prices listed therein but hope you will place an order anyhow.
  - (g) We are sorry that the facts enumerated above have not convinced you of the desirability of putting over a special advertising campaign this year.
  - (h) Immediately after removing the books from the press room, they are sent to the stock department.
  - (i) If the block form is followed, you do not need to indent the paragraphs at all.
  - (j) This method shows that the data secured is complete, up-to-date, and that it can be depended upon.
  - (k) My father is a broker, and I intend to take it up as my life's work also.
  - (l) Please remember that in this office everybody takes care of their own work and that is the reason why we employ less clerks.
  - (m) When still in college, the editor of the town's leading paper offered me a job to work on his paper at a remuneration of \$20 a week to start in on.

- (n) While in this position, the manager got more and more overbearing with me and due to this I was forced to leave and look for something better.
- (o) We have noted that several of the boys miss sales days on the property, therefore we would ask that in the future that each and every one of you make his plans so that it will not interfere with their being on the property every sales day.
- (p) Seen an ad in your paper of a lamp ad by the Economy Lamp Co. I sent after one on Jan. 1 and it came but it was leaking all the time and the shade broke and so I returned it as per their offer of 15 days trial. I have wrote them four times but they will not answer me. Can you do anything to make them come across with some settlement?

- 2(a). Paragraph the following letter properly, giving reasons for the use of each paragraph:

Thank you for making prompt shipment of our Order, No. 145B, for 150 dozen Wilshire Collars, which arrived today. We regret to inform you, however, that careful inspection by our stock clerk shows these collars to be inferior in quality to the ones we ordered in that they are far below your usual standard and not in accordance with the specifications listed in your latest spring catalogue. We expected to receive a first-class, all-linen collar, whereas the ones received are less than 50% linen, and therefore of inferior wearing quality. Our customers are used to buying only high-grade merchandise from us, the quality of which we fully and personally guarantee. To sell them the collars you shipped us would, we are confident, almost certainly lead to complaints because of dissatisfaction with their wearing qualities. In view of the facts just mentioned, we are returning the entire shipment to you to-day by fast express and ask that you replace it at once with 150 Dozen No. 4689, all-linen Wilshire Collars. In the event that you are unable to meet our requirements, please credit our account with the total amount of our Order No. 145B, including transportation charges, sending us your credit memorandum. Since our stock of No. 4689 all-linen Wilshire Collars is one of our best sellers and is almost exhausted, we shall appreciate your immediate and personal attention to this order.

- (b) Prepare an outline composed of the summary thoughts of each paragraph of the revised letter.
  - (c) Is the thought sequence used by the writer of this letter logical? Can you improve it?
3. For negative statements, boastful assertions, and the like contained in the following sentences, substitute affirmative statements:
- (a) We take this opportunity of thanking you for your letter of the 12th and also of expressing our surprise upon reading your refusal to

exhibit your products at our manufacturers' convention this coming fall.

- (b) Your letter of Jan. 10 complaining of unsatisfactory service was answered by us asking you to drive in and allow us a chance to correct the trouble you complained of.
- (c) All that we can do in shipping corn is to test it and see that it has a high germination test and we ship this corn with the understanding that when it arrives, you can examine it and test it in any way you want to and if you find it unsatisfactory for any reason, then you can return it and your money will be refunded. That is as far as we can go in this matter.
- (d) I am not a job hunter nor do I seek to fill a vacancy. What I do seek is a position where I can use the greatest percentage of my talents with an aggressive firm that is ethical and honest in its policies.
- (e) I am of French descent, of excellent appearance, and have an uncanny ability as an organizer.
- (f) I realize that you get many of this type of letter every day, yet I am taking the liberty to write to you and ask you if you do not have a position open for me.

4. Criticize, then rewrite the following beginning and closing paragraphs of miscellaneous letters:

- (a) It is with great pleasure that I find myself in position to be able to answer your letter concerning the commercial department of the Los Robles High School.
- (b) Having resigned my position with the Franklin people, I am now located at 65 Locust Street in charge of Buick service in connection with the Long Beach Body and Fender Works as service manager.
- (c) We wish to advise you that we are in a position to render a transportation service on either your large or your small orders that I am sure you will find is without parallel in your territory.
- (d) Would appreciate a prompt reply so that proper seating arrangements can be provided at the auditorium.
- (e) Anticipating your business, we are. . . .
- (f) Sincerely thanking you in advance for any consideration you may give us in this matter, I am. . . .
- (g) Answering yours of the 15th ult. regarding stenographers, it will be necessary for you to send this branch a special letter advising of the temporary employment of the stenographer you mention showing date commenced and date resigned; this so that our records will be complete.
- (h) Following your recent personal call in this dept., your request for allowance on the price of your radio was referred to my attention.

- (i) Attached to this letter you will find a copy of a letter received from the Feming Company concerning motors delivered to the Philadelphia Branch by the Southern Supply Company.
  - (j) In reply to your recent favor which seems to be without date, we will be pleased to send you our complete catalogue in which you will find listed all the latest styles of radios which we have with prices attached.
  - (k) In reply to yours of recent date, beg to inform that both your orders were shipped.
  - (l) Trusting we may have the pleasure of sending you some samples, we remain.
5. Use each of the following words in a complete sentence: instance, instants, likely, apt, liable, latter, creditable, principal, principle, respectively, raise, all-round, above, except, continual, beside, propose, each other, balance, rest, fewer, data, leave.
6. Revise the following sentences, correcting whatever errors you may find:
- (a) I would like the special outfit called the Wanderer the one which contains the portable stove that burns kerosene and is supposed to be rust proof, the tent which sheds rain and folds excellently into a neat bundle which when set up will accommodate three cots the stove and the three folding chairs, and accompanying this is the cover for the car and the kit which accommodates three persons with aluminum plates, silver-plated knives, forks, and spoons, two skillets, three stew pans, and the other small items listed.
  - (b) We are asking you for the customary credit information not because we are laboring under any suspicion or because we have veiled motives but it is purely a matter of sound business practice with us.
  - (c) We would appreciate a prompt answer to this letter so that we can send your order in case your credit is all right.
  - (d) The enclosed credit application blank is undoubtedly familiar to you and we are sure that it will present no difficulties to you.
  - (e) I feel sure I can prove to you that I have developed a simple system which will cut these problems down to a minimum.
  - (f) We are sending you herewith a list of the departments which for the most part are self-explanatory as to the type of work performed in each one.
  - (g) If I in turn may do anything to retaliate this favor, remember that you can always count on me.
  - (h) Since winter driving is much more severe than any other season, his reason could not understand why any one would drive in zero weather without Warmene.



- (i) Our beds are made of the best materials and we stand behind every bed we sell.
- (j) The study of shorthand is worth while as a source of income and as mental exercise.
- (k) Our lawn-mowers are sold by representatives who are courteous and polite; they are easy to handle and need oiling only once a week.
- (l) On December 15 we shipped you three carloads of Wenatchee apples equipped with heaters.
- (m) From now on the business will be operated by the brother-in-law of the former senior partner who passed away last month in a thoroughly modern fashion.
- (n) I want a young woman to drive my car of a religious inclination.
- (o) You will find this particular variety of dewberries to be of all others on the market the easiest to plant and care for.
- (p) Test your goods before you turn them out in quantity; test your sales arguments before you put your representatives on the road.
- (q) Each one of the four companies mentioned in our last letter supply coal to the town of Millbrook.
- (r) In receipt of your letter of Sept. 30 you will find our check for \$150.
- (s) You state in your letter that the prices charged you by us on your last order were unjust.
- (t) We trust you will find it convenient to extent your business relations with our company.
- (u) I am appealing to you due to your experience with International Motors to give me your personal opinion on these cars.
- (v) It happens, however, that little is known concerning the efficiency of these filing cabinets in actual operation.
- (w) You have the right therefore to expect that the three or four of your best students which we will expect you to recommend shall be used as specimens of the type of work your institution is accomplishing.
- (x) To miss these opportunities for buying goods would be a serious mistake on your part.
- (y) This being the slack season with fur merchants they take this opportunity to check over their requirements for next year.
- (z) With these advantages in mind I don't see how you can afford to miss this year's end-of-the-month sale.

7. Point out and correct the blunders in the following sentences:

- (a) Considering our low price on these three shipments of nails you cannot afford to reject any of these orders.

- (b) The salesman must be out in the field and he visits the customer and gets a personal reaction and thus two birds with one expense have been killed.
- (c) My knowledge of standard bicycles is adequate for ordinary care and upkeep but I seem to be unable to solve the cause for trouble in this new model bicycle.
- (d) After unpacking and carefully following your printed instructions attached to the machine a writing test was made which proved satisfactory.
- (e) I am sure the broken part of the check-writer was unforeseen, but the two weeks delay has caused a great deal of annoyance and therefore I will appreciate your immediate reply.
- (f) Always having been a company which stands behind their product, I know that you will remedy this matter.
- (g) As our club has not enjoyed a good financial year, I would ask that you come to the meeting to us at one-half what we paid you last season please come.
- (h) This adjustment I deem justifiable to ask because of the condition of the shipment on arrival.
- (i) Sincerely speaking, visit our stores only three blocks from the campus and this desk will impress you more than we can say.
- (j) On this shortage bill the customer is told to return the bill promptly if the order is found short.
- (k) This letter is in compliance with your suggestion made during our recent telephone talk which was made in reply to your advertisement for an accountant in the May issue of the *New England Magazine*.
- (l) I am single and don't foresee an immediate exit from bachelorhood.
- (m) I have been encouraged by friends in business that I have all the necessary qualifications for a young man to start as assistant sales manager in the retail trade.
- (n) In designing this particular engine our aim was to add silence to quality and price.
- (o) Our policies call for satisfied users as well as satisfied customers and it is our desire not only to satisfy you but to make you feel that you have received service as well as quality.
- (p) Any reply you may have to make to this request for adjustment will be appreciated.
- (q) I am a young man of good habits who can draw pretty good and want to be an architect as I studied under my father who was a carpenter before the depression hit this town.

much lower than that on which a bank or a bond house would write its letters. When considering the purchase of stationery, most business men look for attractive appearance, durability and strength, absorptiveness, and erasibility. In other words, they want a paper which is more or less brilliant in color, does not break or tear easily, absorbs typewriter ink, and withstands ordinary erasing. A paper of sufficient sizing, rag content, and weight meets these practical requirements.

The amount of rag in the paper, varying from 25 to 100 per cent, determines its durability. Cheap grades of paper are made of wood-pulp (sulphite). The finest business stationery is that manufactured from clean, white, unbleached rags.

The term *bond* applied to business stationery does not signify quality, there being, in fact, bond papers of almost every degree of quality. Originally, bond paper was developed for strength, wear, and a smooth writing surface for pen and ink. It was used for bonds and currency, and later, when the typewriter came into general use, for business correspondence. To-day all business stationery is called bond paper, mainly to distinguish it from so-called linen paper. The former has a smooth, the latter a "linen" finish.

The sensory impression which the recipient of a letter gets as he fingers its paper should be one of firmness and stability. It is well, therefore, when purchasing business stationery to heed the factor of weight. Thus for executive correspondence a paper substance of 24 or even 28 might be used, for general correspondence substance 20, and for export or air-mail correspondence, substance 13 or 16. The numbers represent pound-weight for paper in quantities of 500 sheets.

### *Size*

For general correspondence purpose, the standard  $8\frac{1}{2}" \times 11"$  sheet is the most useful since it accommodates a letter of average length and since it fits the standard filing cabinets. The half-sheet,  $8\frac{1}{2}" \times 5\frac{1}{2}"$ , is not in common use, because in the regular filing drawer it falls out of sight. Moreover, as firms carry on the half-sheet usually the same size of printed heading that appears on the full-size sheet, the former is almost always top-heavy and unsightly. Half-sheets, however, are suitable for inter-office correspondence, since they readily accommodate the brief notes characteristic of this branch of correspondence. For the sake of economy, a few business firms write short routine letters on half-sheets, using paper of standard size for executive and other important communications.

ESTABLISHED 1855

# Rock Island Plow Company

MANUFACTURERS OF

AGRICULTURAL  
IMPLEMENTS



CREAM SEPARATORS  
TRACTORS

ROCK ISLAND, ILL

NEW YORK 701 FIFTH AVENUE  
LONDON 72, OX FORD ST

PARIS 5 CITE PARADIS  
BERLIN 11 LINDENSTRASSE

Burkholder's  
Los Angeles

CONSERVATIVE LETTERHEADS

JOHN E. WOLF PRESIDENT

J. C. HOLMAN VICE PRESIDENT

ADVERTISING *The* MERCHANDISING

JOHN E. WOLF  
COMPANY

OKLAHOMA SAVINGS BLDG SECOND AT ROBINSON  
OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLA.



COZZONE

MANUFACTURERS

THE COZZONE CORPORATION  
Manufacturers of  
FISHING REELS

420 4TH CODEN STREET  
NEWARK, N. J.



PROGRESSIVE LETTERHEADS

Geo. H. Morrill Co. of Cal.

Printing & Lithographic

345 WALL ST.  
LOS ANGELES, CAL.

ROYAL WORCESTER CORSET CO.

Royal Worcester Corsets

BON TON Corsets

WORCESTER, MASS., U.S.A.

OLD-FASHIONED LETTERHEADS

purchasing business envelopes to give due consideration to the function mentioned last. To expedite the return of an undeliverable letter by the post-office, the return card, consisting of the sender's complete mailing address, should appear in the upper left corner of the envelope. To give the envelope the appearance of a social letter, firms with a feminine trade often place the return address on the back flap of the envelope, giving only the house number and the names of the street, city, and state.

The standard size for the business envelope is  $3\frac{5}{8}$ " x  $6\frac{1}{2}$ ", usually called No. 8. For two-page and longer letters, or for letters with enclosures, the  $4\frac{1}{8}$ " x  $9\frac{1}{2}$ ", or No. 10, envelope is the most practical.

### *The Printed Letterhead*

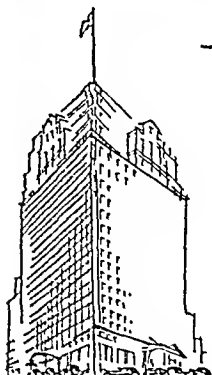
The primary purpose of the printed heading is to disclose to the recipient the sender's identity and address; its secondary purpose is to advertise the sender fittingly. An able printer will know how to design a heading in which these two functions are agreeably blended. Perhaps the least information which a letterhead can give without being incomplete is: -

- (1) the name and nature of the sender's business and
- (2) the complete address, including house number and street, telephone number, and cable address.

These data should appear in thoroughly legible type and in well-balanced form so that they will occupy not more than approximately one fifth of the entire sheet, for otherwise the heading is likely to be top-heavy and to overshadow the typewritten message. Whether data in addition to those mentioned, such as the names of officers, branch houses, and products, or advertising slogans and pictures of trade-marks and goods, should appear in the heading depends on the general character of the sender's firm, its policies, the nature of what it sells, and the particular purpose of the letter for which the printed head is intended.

Whereas formerly the tendency was to crowd the upper fourth or even third of the letter-sheet with poor pictures of factories and other buildings topped by large clouds, and to print the name and address in old script or other formal type, to-day most business men prefer a simple and somewhat dignified heading. The design of modern letterheads is largely in the hands of artists and typographers who by means of arrangement, type-face, color, and illustration achieve really distinctive headings. Users of such headings maintain that their relatively high cost is offset by their increased attention-value; in other words, that a truly attractive and representative heading will influence the recipient favorably toward

WELCOME TO NEW YORK AND THE ALAMAC, MR. NAETHER



*Alamac Hotel.*  
71 ST. AND BROADWAY  
NEW YORK

THE *Alamac* IS  
A MASTERPIECE  
OF MODERN  
HOTEL CREATION

SERVICIOR SERVICE

A SHOWER  
AND BATH  
IN EVERY  
ROOM

THREE RESTAURANTS

EVERY COMFORT  
AWAITS YOU



ALSO THE  
*Alamac*  
ON LAKE HOPATCONG  
N.J.

AT THE *Alamac.*

A letterhead featuring the service idea in a humorous as well as ingenious way. It was designed by Harry Latz, President of Latz Service, Inc., and it illustrates well the power of positive suggestion.

and clean type. Most business letters nowadays are written with the small, élite-size type, which is at once neat and economical. Sales and advertising letters sometimes appear in more than one face and size of type to gain added attention and emphasis. No conclusive proof, however, is available to show that the use of a number of different type-faces in a single letter will enhance its pulling power.

### THE ESSENTIAL PARTS OF THE LETTER

1. The Heading
  - (a) Mailing address of the writer (not needed, of course, when a letter-head is used)
  - (b) Date of the letter
2. The Inside Address (name, title, and address of the person or firm to whom the letter is written)
3. The Salutation
4. The Body
5. The Complimentary Close
6. The Signature

Varying with the business policies and individual tastes of the writer, these parts of the business letter may be styled in the indention, the block, or the hanging paragraph form. The first mentioned is the most conservative; it is still widely used. Its distinguishing characteristic is the indention of the second and successive lines of the heading, of the inside address, and of the signature, and the indention of the first line of each paragraph. Its advantage lies in the comparative ease with which the eye travels quickly from line to line. Business firms with conservative policies or customers do well to favor the use of the indention system in their correspondence.

An increasingly large number of business men, favoring the more modern letter forms, block their letters. In other words, all parts of the letter, including the paragraphs, are begun flush with the margin or at the same point of writing, there being no indentions whatsoever. The double spacing between the parts and the paragraphs of the letter is meant to facilitate reading. While a neatly blocked letter appears perhaps somewhat more artistic than a neatly indented one, yet it cannot be said that it looks as easy to read. To overcome this disadvantage, many stenographers and typists resort to a half-and-half arrangement, by which all parts of the letter are blocked except the paragraphs, which are indented. Of late this mixed arrangement has gained in popularity, and it now bids fair to become a standard mode of typographical arrangement.



*letter:* Or, better still, let me send this book to you for your personal examination. You will then get a concrete idea of its actual value and real worth. I shall be glad to allow you five days' time in which to look it over.

Which one shall I send?

*Compli-  
mentary  
close:*

*Signature:* {  
AS:AC

Very truly yours,

THE BUSINESS PRESS,  
Alexander Smith,  
Manager.

The so-called hanging paragraph arrangement is in every respect like the block form except that each paragraph "hangs," so to say, by the top line. The first line of each paragraph is blocked, while every succeeding line is indented an equal number of spaces at the left and at the right margins. If these margins, especially the right, are even, then the arrangement is likely to be very pleasing. Because the hanging paragraph form suggests novelty, its use is confined to such firms as advertising agencies and others desirous of impressing their correspondents with the modernness of their business practices. A letter well typed in the hanging paragraph style has added attention-value, which in the case of unsolicited letters may easily be sufficient inducement for reading. Below is illustrated the paragraph arrangement which characterizes this kind of typographical set-up.

You will realize, from this brief description, what an unusually strong sense appeal this clever advertising medium, equipped with perfect public address apparatus, will make to the natural curiosity of every man, woman, and child that hears or sees it. You will appreciate how it will fire their imagination and stimulate their wish to know just what is in this great bottle, the like of which they have never before seen or "heard."

## *The Heading*

1. *Parts.* Where a sheet of plain paper is used, the heading consists of the complete mailing address of the writer and the date. Where a letterhead is used, only the date is necessary, the mailing address being already contained in the printed letterhead.

be abbreviated according to the regulations found in the United States Postal Guide.

The date is best written out in full, as "May 30, 19—"; in no case should it be written entirely in figures, as "5/30/—." This is unbusiness-like and confusing. Accepted abbreviations of the names of the months (Jan., Feb., Mar., Apr., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov., Dec.) may be used.

No letters such as *st*, *nd*, or *th* need be added to the numerals expressing the date of the month. Simply write "May 3, 19—," not "May 3rd, 19—." The use of these letters, however, is justified in the body of the letter if the name of the month is not given: "We are glad to say in answer to your letter of July 23, that your order No. 21 will go forward promptly on the 25th, as promised."

### *The Inside Address*

The inside address identifies the addressee by giving his name, title, and address. The street address is sometimes omitted. The name of the person or firm addressed should be spelled exactly as the owner spells it in the signature of his letters or advertisements. Thus, abbreviations of Christian names, such as "Wm.," "Geo.," and others should be used only when the persons bearing them use them in this form. It has been found that mailing lists composed of names obtained from the personal signatures of letters and spelled in the same way are, other things being equal, more valuable than those made up from other, less personal, sources, in which the given names are either written out in full or represented merely by the initial letters.

The words "Company," "Corporation," and "Brothers," as well as the titles of officers and names of departments, are usually written out. If, however, a firm in its signature has definitely adopted "Co.," then it is wise to use this abbreviation when writing to it. The same is true of the use of "&" or "and" in firm names. Thus, it is "GINN AND COMPANY," but "D. C. HEATH & CO." Abbreviations and contractions, such as "Corp.," "Comp.," "Mfg.," "Att'n," "Dpt.," "Treas.," "Pres.," "Gen'l Mgr.," and the like, are clumsy, undignified, and frequently enigmatic.

Names of cities should, of course, never be abbreviated. In the case of the city of New York, it is correct to address either New York, N. Y., or simply New York City. This is the only case in which it is correct to add "City" and omit the state name.

1. *Position and form.* The inside address, which is single-spaced, is placed on the left-hand margin of the letter about an inch from the

the longest line in the inside address, where, being surrounded by ample white space, it attracts the reader's attention quickly. When it is desired, however, to check the accuracy of a mailing list of individual names, then it is best to omit the special address altogether and to place the addressee's name immediately above the firm name, thus ensuring the return of the letter in case it cannot be delivered:

Mr. Chas. F. Morrow, Manager  
Black Swan Studios  
Gainesville, Fla.

Since most firms discourage the receipt at their place of business of letters addressed to individuals and urge that "all correspondence should be addressed to the company," the special addresses cited above enable the sender of a letter to reach his man as directly as possible. It should be noted that in cases in which a special address is used, the opening salutation is "Gentlemen," since it must agree with the inside address.

4. *Additional sheets.* An additional page of a letter does not have the full letterhead nor is the inside address repeated in full. Usually the sheet, which is paper of the same quality and size as the letterhead, has, an inch or two from the top in the upper left corner, always flush with the margin, the name of the addressee, the number of the page, and the date. The following arrangement will illustrate:

Costa Mesa Bird Farm - 2- April 6, 19—.

5. *Titles.* Courtesy demands that a person's name be prefixed by the proper title. The following titles are very frequently used in business correspondence:

"Mr." is used if the (male) person has no other title.

"Esq." is "Esquire" abbreviated, and is rarely used. If it is used, it *follows* the name, serving instead of "Mr.," as "James C. Hansen, Esq."

"Messrs." is the abbreviation of "Messieurs," the French for "Gentlemen." It is used to address two or more men, or men and women, associated in partnership. It is also employed when addressing a corporation the name of which indicates individuals. If the corporation uses a trade name, "Messrs." is omitted entirely. For example:

Messrs. Walker & Beck

Messrs. Smith, Schroder & Company'

The Emporium

The R. & V. Engineering Company

to double space the envelope address regardless of how it appears on the letter-sheet. Thus arranged in the lower right half of the envelope, the address becomes plainly visible and easily legible, certainly far more so than would be a blocked and single-spaced address. Illustration:

Return to:  
F. C. Hunter  
98 Carl St.  
Chicago, Ill.

Mr. Henry B. Munson  
2367 Westminster Ave.  
Salt Lake City, Utah

It has frequently been suggested that in order to speed up sorting of mail in the post-office, the Chinese system of addressing envelopes be used:

Salt Lake City, Utah  
2367 Westminister Ave.  
Mr. Henry B. Munson

Since, however, postal employees are trained, in sorting mail, to look at the last line, this system would cause confusion unless generally adopted.

1. *Additional directions.* Additional directions, such as "Personal," "Special Service Department," "General Delivery," etc., should be placed in the lower left-hand corner of the envelope. This applies also to names of foreign countries.

2. *Return card.* This is the complete return address of the sender. It is best placed in the upper left-hand corner of the envelope, as shown in the form above. Its primary purpose is to furnish sufficient information to the post-office for the return of the letter if it is not deliverable. Its secondary purpose is to advertise the sender, who may add a timely slogan, a trade-mark, or even a picture of his product. The value of such advertising on envelopes is doubtful; even in the case of a sales letter it may preclude the recipient's taking the letter out of the envelope.

More or less exclusive firms dealing with well-to-do women usually

omit their names from the return card, which they place on the back flap of the envelope, as is the custom in social correspondence.

### *The Salutation*

Business usage and courtesy demand that the proper salutation be employed. Formal salutations ordinarily used in business letters are:

"Dear Sir" when addressing a (male) individual.

"Gentlemen" when addressing a firm (partnership or corporation)

"Dear Madam" when addressing a married or unmarried woman

"Ladies" when addressing a firm composed of women

"My dear Sir" and "My dear Madam" indicate greater formality

"My dear Mr. Brown" indicates more familiarity

"Dear Mr. Brown" suggests a friendly relationship

Since present-day business aims at the establishment of friendly relations with customers, it tends toward the use of the more personal salutations, such as "Dear Miss Moore," "Dear Mr. Bulaich." "Dear Friend" is unbusinesslike, and in most cases presumptuous. "Dear Customer" and "Dear Patron" are too impersonal. "Sir" is customarily used when addressing an editor, governor, mayor, or president.

*Punctuation and position.* The salutation is followed by a colon. It is placed flush with the left margin exactly two typewriter spaces below the inside address:

The Paine Manufacturing Co.,  
Sigourney, Iowa.

Gentlemen:

The reader's effort to grasp the message of the letter quickly may be facilitated by numbering, indenting, paragraphing, or tabulating important parts of the body. Thus, in asking and in obtaining information on a number of different phases of a subject, it is well to number the questions or answers and to indent them, as shown in the following illustrations:

## A

Below are enumerated our production policies, in accordance with your letter of March 30:

- (1) to make a highly refined quality of Cheddar cheese;
- (2) to use only high-grade, pasteurized milk in its manufacture;
- (3) to produce only one grade of cheese;
- (4) to pack it in cartons convenient for retailer and consumer;
- (5) to market it under a private brand name.

If the various points enumerated occupy more than a typewritten line, they should be double-spaced; otherwise single-spacing is acceptable.

Other forms of attractive typographical display follow:

Please tell me what materials or manufacturing processes make letter paper

- (a) absorptive?
- (b) smooth and brilliant?
- (c) strong and lasting?

## B

Below I am giving you a complete summary of my experience:

Positions Held: \_\_\_\_\_

Duties: \_\_\_\_\_

Accomplish-  
ments: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for  
Leaving: \_\_\_\_\_

*The Complimentary Close*

It is merely a courteous phrase customarily used to leave the correct impression on the reader. The following are the standard forms used:

*Impersonal and  
most approved  
for business  
letters:*

{ Yours truly,  
Yours very truly,  
Very truly yours,

*Used when there  
is a more or less  
close and friendly  
relationship between  
the writer and  
the reader:*

{ Sincerely yours,  
Cordially yours,  
Faithfully yours,

*Sometimes used  
in sales and  
circular letters,  
and of some-  
what doubtful  
value:*

{ Aloha!  
(by a California navigation company)  
Canarily yours,  
(by a magazine devoted to canary culture)  
Thriftily yours,  
(by a mail-order house featuring low prices)

It will be seen from these illustrations that only the first word of the complimentary close is capitalized, and that the complimentary close is always written out in full.

*Position and punctuation.* The complimentary close is placed about two spaces below the last line of the letter, and begins a few spaces to the right of the center of the page. It is followed by a comma.

to write his name, since most dictators write above, through, or below such a line, which tends only to make the entire signature unsightly. Care should be exercised that the signature, in which open or closed punctuation may be used, does not run into the right margin.

To make the firm primarily liable for the contents of the letter, its name should precede that of the dictator:

UFA STUDIOS

F. Miller

Sales Department

To make the dictator responsible, the opposite arrangement is employed:

Mervin Montgomery,

Superintendent,

AMERICAN MOTORS, Inc.

If a woman signs her name, she should always indicate whether she is single or married by prefixing her name with the typed title "Miss" or "Mrs.":

DELPHIN DEPARTMENT STORE

(Mrs.) Dorothy F. Schocker

Advertising Manager

A dictator unable or unwilling (!) to write his name legibly should have it typed in full either immediately below his pen-written signature or else in the left margin, where it replaces his initials:

PERU MANUFACTURING COMPANY

Wm. D. Schermerhorn (pen-written)

Wm. D. Schermerhorn (typewritten)  
Correspondence Critic

WDS:CJ  
Encls.2

PERU MANUFACTURING COMPANY

Wm. D. Schermerhorn (pen-written)

Wm. D. Schermerhorn-F  
Encls.2

Correspondence Critic



4. mr. earnest abbott, esquire, 560 one hundred fifteenth street, new york city, new york, dear customer, very sincerely yours, the buffalo hotels, incorp., buffalo, n.y., three enclosures.
5. townner thompson, ph.d., professor of geology, univ. of michig., ann harbor, michigan, dear prof, cordially yrs, the eastern pub. comp'y, limited, 525-10th avenue, boston, mass.
6. martha thomas (not known whether single or married), post office box 789, station c, indianapolis, indiana, dear miss, respectfully yours, the maxwell dry good store, marion, ohio, james cantwell, sales promotion dpt, one enclosure.
7. 675-5th str, dec'br 23, knoxville, tenn, ray delhauer, atty at law, 479 ontario drive, colorado spgs, colo, my dear sir, cordially yours, howard jones.
8. film labs, 7500 lankershim bvld, north hollywood, cal, att'n geo glasser, export dpt, dear sir, sincerely, the florida furrier's ass'n, 64 roosevelt bld, tampa, florida.
9. mr. patrick richardson & sons (law firm), 57 pa. avenue, roanoke, virg, dear mr. richardson, very respectfully, sadie nickell (single) mirramar apts, st. louis, missouri.
10. the first nat'l bk, 89 bloomington place, baltimore, md, attn sec'y to pres, dear sir, pacific steamship comp'y, per franklin shepherd, vicepres. & treas, 8 waterfront drive, portland, oregon.
11. rev. albert dyer, d.d., 5-8th avenue, manchester, connecticut, dear doctor, very truly, mrs. helen mccoey, box 8, rural route 3, fenton, new jersey.
12. deep well, texas, april 27, swanson & bro's, cheyenne, wyo., architects and builders, sirs, resp'y yours, peter fromm, pres., the texas construction comp.
13. honourable chester place jr., mayor of newton, mont, dear mr. mayor, yours for greater health, the maxwell sanitarium, 45 johnston terrace, salt lake city, utah.
14. the funston creamerys, mrs. f. blake & mr. k. morris, props., lush valley, wyoming, dear sirs, truly yrs, the washington farmer, per james wildman, circulation dept, farmers' bldg, spokane, washington.
15. suit 25, merrit tower, cincinatti, ohio, elizabeth & greta rudholm (unmarried sisters), 57 santa maria terrace, phila., penna., dear misses, yours respectively, everlasting fountain pen comp., by fred finster, sales promot. manager.
16. box 899, the tribune, monticello, missisipi, gents, truly yrs, tom leonard, 65 loma vista drive, chicago, ill., two enclosures.
17. messres. nelson and head, haberdashers, 515 s. mich. blvd., chicago, ill., dear sirs, attention mr. john head, cordially, kansas clothing company, wichita, kansas, 56 red wheat bldg.

grasp of the whole history of the case is indispensable! Varying with the ready availability of the data, such assembling may require from ten minutes to ten days. Obviously, whether short or long, its successful completion is likely to save time for writer as well as reader.

### *Methods of Sorting and Dictating*

So far as the sorting of incoming letters is concerned, most businesses have their own methods. Urgent and important messages are given first consideration. Customers' letters are answered before prospects'! Business matters take precedence over semi-private matters. Whatever problems the day's mail places on the dictator's desk must be solved according to their respective importance and the sender's need for a prompt answer. To sort incoming letters, therefore, as *important* or *not important*, and these in turn as "to be answered to-day" or "to be answered later" is good business practice. It enables the correspondent to devote the morning hours, when his mind is fresh and clear, to the dictation of the more difficult letters, and to leave the afternoon for the disposal of less difficult ones. Moreover, sorting letters as to whether they require immediate action or not helps a correspondent to reply with promptitude where promptitude is necessary, as in serious complaints or in urgent matters of credit.

because most men are visually minded. They can much more easily see than hear a letter in its entirety. If important changes are in order, these can swiftly be made in the outline—before dictation. Furthermore, many stenographers, not having been properly trained, are ineffective oral readers. Lacking rhythmic sense, they do not perceive euphony in the dictator's sentences.

The particular type of outline to be used naturally depends on the writer's ability and the purpose of the letter. The chronological is perhaps the easiest and, therefore, the most widely used. It proceeds from early to late occurrences. Accordingly, in dictating adjustment letters, the correspondent begins with the complainant's first report of the trouble and ends with its final disposition. Some collection letters proceed from the time of debt incurrence to the time of present delinquency. Another type of outline, for a letter intended to produce a particular psychological effect, presents first those aspects of the transaction of most import to the reader and closes with those of most import to the writer. It is the popular "from *you* to *we* or *I*" (attention to action) plan. Application and sales letters usually benefit from its strategy. In cases for which neither the chronological nor the reader-to-writer ("psychological") method seems suited, the climactic type of outline, which proceeds from the least to the most essential (usually to the reader) thought, may be adopted. It is often applied to letters purely informational, in which no noticeable effort to persuade or to sell is apparent. It is seldom used in sales appeals, since it neglects the attention factor. The three methods suggested may, of course, be used interchangeably, and a wide-awake business man will so use them.

## ILLUSTRATIONS

### *The Chronological Method*

1. Your complaint against one of our advertisers was received and acknowledged on August 20.
2. Investigation made meantime shows his standing to be reputable and his methods to be fair.
3. Yesterday, August 30, he wrote us that he would make full and prompt adjustment.
4. Should you not hear from him soon, please notify us.

### *The Reader-to-Writer (Psychological) Method*

1. Your interest in Continental Airplanes is appreciated.
2. You should own a Continental Airplane for reasons hereinafter stated.

3. Let us prove the claims made above.
4. Let us place a Continental Airplane at your service now.

### *The Climactic Method*

1. You should exhibit your trucks at the coal dealers' convention.
2. We have had one of your exhibits at every convention so far.
3. Many visitors will see your exhibit.
4. We will give you ample space at reasonable rates.
5. You will meet many bona fide prospects and close many sales.

### *Helps to Better Dictation*

In the actual wording of the letter, the principles of clearness, correctness, and compactness presented in Chapter III should be intelligently applied. It may be added here that many a letter is supine because its words and phrases are too loosely joined. This weakness may be overcome by using the emphatic, so-called periodic sentence, the complete meaning of which is not known till the period is reached. Like the detective story, it is based on the principle of suspense—its meaning is withheld. A judicious number of periodic sentences will invigorate almost any business letter. Loose sentences may be readily changed into emphatic ones by placing dependent clauses at the beginning, by using correlative conjunctions, by changing a principal clause at the beginning of a sentence into a dependent sentence element, and by avoiding verbosity.

## ILLUSTRATIONS

*Unemphatic:*            You will be highly pleased with the results of a demonstration of the mower, which the Indiana Equipment Company will give you upon application at any time.

*Emphatic:*            If you will telephone the Indiana Equipment Company for a demonstration of the mower, we are confident the results will please you.

*Unemphatic:*            We are sure that you will find a good supply of Marley Kits on hand at Franklin's and that they will give you excellent service.

*Emphatic:*            Marley Kits—every one of which is guaranteed to serve you long and well—you will find at Franklin's.

Freshness in dictation is gained by emphasizing the human aspects of business transactions. There are many correspondents steeped in rigorous routine because they have forgotten that it takes at least two men to make a business deal. Their letters lack the spontaneity that spices business men's conversation at the conference table and elsewhere. Of course, one should not expect a life-giving personality to step, so to say, out of a drivel's letter. Commonplace dictators, commonplace letters. But often these men can be taught the dollars-and-cents value of "human" letters. The particular forms which such teaching takes will be discussed in a later chapter. Suffice it here to say that persistent practice must always precede the dictation of genial letters. Far too many correspondents are satisfied with their first results. If they would stop to think why so much advertising copy has a pleasing flavor, they, too, would visualize more keenly, compose more carefully, and re-write more often.

The following has a smooth spontaneity characteristic of effective dictation:

This booklet will be of great interest to you and to all your executives who have a hand in your firm's distribution policies.

It describes how the strategic placement of spot stocks in our warehouses has enabled hundreds of manufacturers to cut their distribution costs—secure more and better jobbers and dealers—save freight and the expensive operation of branch houses—increase sales and net profit.

It suggests how you may apply this proved distribution method to your own business—enables you to request a marketing survey which will show you just what our warehouses can do to make your business more profitable.

Our warehouses are located in 234 cities of the United States. They furnish all necessary facilities and services required for the spot-stock distribution of raw materials, manufactured articles, and service parts of every kind.

Send to-day for your copy of this remarkable booklet.

Practical suggestions leading to coöperation between the dictator and the stenographer are made in a long list of "Don'ts for Dictators,"\* from which the following are excerpts:

\* *Postage and the Mailbag*, Vol. XVII, 10:824.

### A. DON'TS TO BE OBSERVED IN THE TREATMENT OF THE STENOGRAPHER

1. Don't let the stenographer sit idle all morning and then expect her to do a day's work in two or three hours.
2. Don't keep the stenographer waiting while you decide what you are going to say in a letter. Make such decisions before you engage the stenographer's time.
3. Don't waste the time of the stenographer. If you have an important telephone conversation or something else to take care of, release her. Postpone your dictation until after you have disposed of that long-distance call or other matter for which you have arranged.
4. Don't hold back any files or papers which will enable the stenographer to produce more efficient work. Give her every paper which has a bearing on the correspondence which you are dictating. This is especially desirable if you intend to leave the office, thus making it impossible for the stenographer to ask you questions later.
5. Don't hurry your stenographer. Give her time to make intelligent and neat transcriptions. If besides your dictation she has that of other men to take, bear in mind that she may already have much work when you begin your dictation.
6. Don't neglect to inform the stenographer exactly of the corrections and changes which you permit her to make in any of your dictation.

### B. DON'TS TO BE OBSERVED WHILE DICTATING

7. Don't think about something else while dictating. Proper concentration may prevent the rewriting of some of your letters.
8. Don't get up and walk about the office while dictating. The noise is likely to make it impossible for the stenographer to hear what you are saying. Moreover, when you walk away from her, your voice goes away with you. Stay where the stenographer can hear your dictation clearly and unmistakably.
9. Don't neglect to indicate to the stenographer that you are dictating to her. Sometimes she has no way of knowing that what you are saying is not the continuation of a conversation you have been carrying on with some one else. By saying, "Please take this letter," you can always settle any doubt on this score.
10. Don't correct yourself while dictating without letting your stenographer know what you are doing. She cannot always be certain whether you are repeating for emphasis or for amendment.
11. Don't telephone and dictate at the same time.
12. Don't mumble. Correct transcription is impossible when the dictator mumbles. Speak clearly and crisply. Remember the stenographer dislikes to ask you to repeat.

13. Don't dictate with a cigar, cigarette, or pipe in your mouth. The stenographer cannot understand what you say when you thus block your speech. You would not attempt to talk over the telephone with a cigar in your mouth.

14. Don't run your sentences together when dictating. Pause between them. The inflection of your voice has much to do with the intelligent transcription of your dictation.

15. Don't sprinkle your dictation with numerous "and"'s, "ah"'s, "er"'s, and similar expressions. The stenographer is often unable to tell which ones are made inadvertently.

16. Don't neglect to spell out proper names and unusual words in your dictation, especially if they do not appear in the papers which you turn over to the stenographer. Spell such words slowly and distinctly. Remember the difficulty you so often have in getting a name correctly over the telephone.

### C. DON'TS TO BE OBSERVED IMMEDIATELY AFTER DICTATION

17. Don't follow your letters with phrases such as "Dictated but not read." If you have not signed a letter yourself, then your signature should be concluded with the word "By" and the initials of the person who signed your name.

18. Don't forget to read your letters carefully before you sign them.

19. Don't allow enclosures to be left behind when your letters go out. Such omission often means loss of time, even loss of business.

20. Don't wait until the end of the day to sign your mail. Stop now and then for this work, thus keeping letters going to the mail-room throughout the day.

### D. DON'TS TO BE OBSERVED WHEN USING DICTATING MACHINES

21. Don't attempt to use a dictating machine unless you master the rules governing its proper operation. Following directions for using the machine will ensure more satisfactory work from the transcriber.

22. Don't disregard the dictating-machine rules for the use of the memorandum sheet, on which you are to indicate corrections, the lengths of the dictated letters, and requests for extra copies. Serious loss of time and materials may be caused if, toward the close of a long letter which the transcriber is typing, she receives the first inkling of corrections and extra copies she is to make.

Many dictators welcome the new "slant" they get on their work from reading good books on business correspondence, advertising, sales-

manship, psychology, and kindred subjects. To-day such books are so attractively priced as to enable any one seriously striving for knowledge in these fields to stock his book-shelf generously. Correspondents in the employ of large firms usually have unlimited access to the company library. Regular reading of magazines devoted wholly or in part to the cause of better letters, such as *Printers' Ink*, *Postage and the Mailbag*, *The Printing Art Quarterly*, and others, will put the correspondent quickly in touch with modern letter-writing methods used by successful business houses everywhere. Since such reading is usually not only informational but inspirational, it tends to broaden the dictator's view of his own job, and so to keep him out of the all-too-common rut. Finally, every dictator should have at hand at least one authoritative dictionary and an equally authoritative book of synonyms. The habitual use of these indispensable tools will measurably increase his command of English.

### *The Stenographer's Work*

A really efficient stenographer can be a decided aid to the cause of profitable dictation. Too many stenographers regard their positions merely as stepping-stones to marriage, and for that reason make no earnest effort to improve their use of English. Any stenographer worth her keep should be able to spell, capitalize, abbreviate, and punctuate correctly. Her command of English should be broad enough to enable her to judge critically and objectively any dictation she may be required to take and, if need be, to change it for the better.

There should be a definite understanding between dictator and stenographer as to whether the latter may, without asking special permission, revise a letter, as, for example, by ridding it of "rubber-stamps" and by improving its sentence structure. The depressing truth is that many stenographers are so inadequately schooled that they fail to recognize either triteness or clumsiness in their employers' letters. To meet this deficiency, many dictators require their stenographers and typists to study books on English, or even to enroll in evening and extension courses in the subject.

By having the necessary data on hand at dictation time and by familiarizing herself with the leading details of the letters to be answered, a stenographer can save the dictator much time and energy. If, machine-like, she regards each dictated letter merely as another piece of transcription, she is not likely to advance in her chosen field; if, on the other hand, she looks upon it as a maker or breaker of good business relations, she shows a progressive spirit that is likely to stand her in good stead.



In addition to being a speedy typist, an accurate transcriptionist, and a reliable filing clerk, a stenographer should be neat in her work. Like an artistically framed picture, an evenly margined, well-centered, and neatly typed letter, free from erasures and strike-overs, compels favorable attention. And neither dictator nor stenographer has any business producing letters which do not meet this most desirable requirement.

A good stenographer knows whether a letter which she has transcribed is mailable or not. If it is not up to the dictator's or the firm's usual standards, she will retype it without first being told. Sister Mary E. Malone\* interviewed 100 business men engaged in different types of commercial enterprise, and responsible for the dictating and signing of letters in their respective firms, for the purpose of ascertaining what they considered mailable letters. Of these 100 dictators,

- 96 do not consider a letter mailable if it contains misspelled words
- 82 do not consider a letter mailable if it contains a transposition (*teh* for *the*, etc.)
- 82 do not consider a letter mailable if it contains a noticeable erasure
- 75 do not consider a letter mailable if it contains a word wrongly hyphenated
- 62 do not consider a letter mailable if its typographical arrangement is poorly balanced
- 58 do not consider a letter mailable if it contains a minor omission (*a*, *an*, *the*)
- 12 do not consider a letter mailable if it contains a slight erasure

In answer to the query "What type of error occurs most frequently in your non-mailable letters?"

- 27 dictators mentioned misspelled words
- 25 dictators mentioned meaningless transcriptions
- 20 dictators mentioned typographical errors, such as strike-overs
- 9 dictators mentioned faulty punctuation
- 7 dictators mentioned noticeable erasures
- 6 dictators said they had no non-mailable letters
- 3 dictators mentioned poor arrangement on the sheet
- 2 dictators mentioned omission of words
- 1 dictator mentioned failure to correct errors made in dictation

Other worth-while data disclosed by this study are that, of the 100 persons interviewed, seventy-one leave the matter of punctuating and paragraphing to the discretion of their stenographers, eighteen indicate

\* *Journal of Business Education*, Vol. IX, 9: 15 and 10: 13.

all punctuation marks and all paragraphs in their dictation, five indicate paragraphs only, and two indicate paragraphs and quotation marks.

In reply to the question "What typographical style of letter do you prefer?"

56 dictators favored indenting

22 dictators favored blocking

8 dictators favored partial blocking

1 dictator favored indenting for short letters and blocking for long ones

1 dictator varies the style to suit the kind of letter

12 dictators leave the matter to the discretion of their stenographers and typists

## B

Our No. 14 compressor is giving trouble and I am writing to see if you can give any suggestions. We got a new car of oil from the Vitality Oil Co. and it seems to be a little lighter gravity, though it is supposed to be 27 plus as was the last car we had. At any rate we do not seem to be able to prevent a knocking in the cylinder with this oil and it does not give us the same efficiency—that is the compressor does not take her load after “cutting in” from running idle. Our engineer has done everything that he can think of to remedy the matter but cannot seem to find it. It is evident that at times the explosion occurs too soon. The result is the same apparently as in an automobile that has a wrong mixture. We think we might possibly need a different nozzle. There seems to be no feasible way to regulate the feed except to change nozzles.

I wish you would advise us in this matter and if you think we should have a smaller nozzle, please send it along by parcel post.

We have several nozzles and are using the smallest we have.

## C

It would appear to us that ample time has now been granted you within which to make some arrangement for payment of the interest which is delinquent on your mortgage loan of \$6000, and to reimburse us for taxes paid, with interest thereon, and we respectfully request that you favor us with settlement.

## D

We thank you for your remittance of April 14 for \$229. From this you deduct your debit which applies on invoice of April 3rd, to make 50 Sash Sheaves #110 at \$21.30 per 100 less 25-20%. Upon referring to your shipping order we find that the typist made an error in copying the item as #110. Our records show what actually was shipped was 50 Sash Sheaves #112, which you ordered in the same order. The 50 #110 are still due; therefore as the price charged is correct we are disallowing your deduction of \$2.12, amount which it will be in order for you to include when next remitting.

5. The following sentences lack emphasis. Rewrite them:

- (a) You need not sign your name to this questionnaire unless you care to, but we earnestly hope you will return this questionnaire to us, for it will be a distinct aid in preparing more entertaining radio programs for you.
- (b) Please bring this matter to the attention of all parties concerned, and we would suggest that you again review the above-mentioned letter of instructions, making certain that it is clearly understood.

- (c) We want to see every dealer give the booklet the attention it deserves. The booklet represents a lot of planning and a tremendous amount of work on our part.
  - (d) Talk the dealers up on this—it will pay them—because as soon as the booklet gets in circulation, it's going to bring a lot of new faces around for copies.
  - (e) I know you will appreciate this situation, as I understand that the Union Pacific as well as our company has been going through a very rapid curtailment in advertising appropriation.
  - (f) I am sure you can readily appreciate what the aggregate amount of our contributions would be were we to subscribe to all of the above Boy Scout councils, and while we are cognizant of the good work done by these movements, we are forced to take the position that they should be supported by individuals rather than the corporations.
  - (g) Probably the answer appears to be ambiguous because I am not familiar with the business, nor do I know anything about the strips referred to in the letter.
  - (h) We have 600-1 1/2" Black Hexagon Lock Nuts we would like to dispose of and are wondering if it will be possible for you to take these off our hands and at what price.
6. Clip three advertisements the copy of which strikes you as having a pleasing freshness. Submit them with your reasons for the selection.
  7. Write a concise report on "Coöperation between Dictator and Stenographer" or a similar topic, basing it on your own experience as dictator or stenographer, on your observations, and on your readings.
  8. Prepare suitable paragraph outlines for two or more letters. Base your outlines on problems selected from any one of the following chapters, giving chapter and problem number with each outline.
  9. Ask a number of local business men or women what factor or factors may render a letter which they have dictated non-mailable. Report your findings to your instructor in a suitable letter.
  10. Ascertain the advantages and disadvantages of both machine dictation and dictation to a stenographer. Be prepared to present your findings to the class orally and to submit at the same time a written summary of your report to your instructor.
  11. Assume that yesterday you gave the cashier of a local restaurant a silver dollar in payment for a meal which you had just taken there. After she had passed you the change and while you were making ready to take a chair in the lobby of the restaurant only a few feet away from her desk, she called to you in an angry tone of voice and so that a number of guests could plainly hear it: "Say, I want a better dollar than this. I

won't take any counterfeit money. See here, I can cut the edges of your dollar with a knife."

You took back the silver dollar without question or argument and gave her a one-dollar bill at which she looked very suspiciously before she finally put it aside. When you called her attention to the tactless and insulting nature of her remarks, she became again indignant and flatly refused to apologize for her unbusinesslike conduct. Asking to see the manager, you were told that he was out of town and that he would not be back until the day after to-morrow.

Since in the meantime you are obliged to leave town, you are unable to complain personally to the manager of this insulting treatment accorded you, a steady customer of the restaurant for over two years. You therefore decide to call the matter to the manager's attention by means of a letter.

You are now asked

- (a) to set forth in outline form and in their logical sequence the various key thoughts that will form the basis of your letter;
- (b) to be prepared to dictate from this outline the entire letter of complaint.

PART II

TYPES OF BUSINESS LETTERS

## CHAPTER VI

### INQUIRIES

#### Inquiries and Replies to Inquiries

Letters of inquiry received by business men are either solicited or unsolicited. Solicited requests for information sent in response to various kinds of advertising usually pertain to the merchandise or service advertised; they usually bring orders sooner or later. Unsolicited inquiries may be classified according to whether they relate to the product or service offered for sale or to other business matters, in which latter case they are not likely to culminate in sales.

Of all routine letters, inquiries are among the most widely used. Certainly there is hardly a business man who does not on many occasions ask for and furnish information by letter. Because inquiries are so numerous in the business mail, because frequently they deal with matters outside the realm of business, and because so many come from samplers and catalogue collectors, many a business man gives inquiries less thoughtful attention than other routine letters which pertain to business matters always. Such a policy, however, since it ignores good-will, is likely to prove costly.

Effective letters of inquiry are courteous, specific, and compact. They enable their recipients to give the desired data promptly and correctly. If many questions are asked, each one should be numbered and tabulated to make it convenient and easy for the reader to dictate a reply without having to search out and repeat each question. In case the inquirer is neither prospect nor customer of the firm addressed, or in case his request does not concern its merchandise or service, he should enclose return postage.

#### *Making Routine Inquiries*

Routine inquiries are made for the purpose of obtaining price-lists, booklets, catalogues, samples, the names of dealers, prices, and other information.

In simple inquiries, nothing but a courteous, brief request for the information is needed:

Gentlemen:

Please send me your booklet "Business," as advertised in this morning's Telegram.

Yours very truly,

Gentlemen:

I shall appreciate your sending me at once your Rainster Catalogue, and also the name of your local dealer.

Yours very truly,

Longer and more complicated letters asking for information, and those which depend for success upon the good-will of the person written to, open with a brief statement of the reason for the inquiry, followed by the request for information, and close with an expression of appreciation. For example:

Iowa Farmers' Co-operative Association,  
839 Foster St.,  
Des Moines, Iowa.

Attention of the Secretary

Gentlemen:

*Reason for  
inquiry:*

The farmers of Benton County are about to form an association similar to the Iowa Farmers' Co-operative Association, as described in the May issue of CO-OPERATION.

*Request  
for infor-  
mation:*

Will you please give us what information you can on the following points:

1. How does your Association regulate distribution of farm products?
2. By what means does your Association encourage greater production of farm products?
3. What particular methods has your Association found most effective for the improvement of standards of grade?

*Expression  
of appre-  
ciation:*

We shall be very much obliged to you for as much information in answer to these questions as you can give us.

Very truly yours,

### *Asking Favors*

Favors should be asked of a business man only when the writer is reasonably sure that the recipient of his letter is in a position to grant



them without much loss of time and effort, that they pertain to a subject related to the addressee's personal or business interests, and that the information sought cannot be obtained more readily elsewhere.

No information except that which is absolutely necessary for the granting of the favor need be given in letters asking favors. Apologies for taking the reader's time and effort prejudice the latter against extending the favor. Their use has no justification whatever in these letters of inquiry, which should be confident and positive in tone.

The main subjects of each paragraph are about the same as those already given. They include:

- (1) general subject of the letter—reason for asking the favor;
- (2) the favor itself, and its possible benefit to the reader, if granted;
- (3) a brief statement of appreciation.

Note the positive tone of the following letter addressed to a newspaper, which was very successful in bringing the information asked for:

✓ Dear Mr. Cox:

*Subject of letter:* We are very desirous of getting accurate and unprejudiced facts pertaining to the furniture business in your town.

*The favor itself:* We are appealing to you because we know that you can best supply the information asked for in the enclosed questionnaire.

*Its possible benefit to reader:* Though we cannot give you any definite assurance that the supplying of this information will sooner or later directly benefit you, we can say that we are enthusiastic advocates of the home-town newspaper as an advertising medium for Duro-Furniture dealers, and we encourage and co-operate with our dealers in the use of it.

*Statement of appreciation:* We shall greatly appreciate your sincere co-operation in answering all, or as many as you can, of the questions listed in the questionnaire.

Very truly yours,

If data are sought on many different subjects or on many phases of one subject, necessitating a large number of queries, then it is best to use a questionnaire and to write a separate letter explaining its purpose and the reader's particular connection with it. Contrary to common belief, a questionnaire will bring good results if the questions are worded care-

fully and interestingly. The letter introducing the questionnaire should convince the reader that the inquirer's purpose is worth while and therefore deserves coöperation, or else that the former will in some way benefit by giving the information asked. Often the typographical appearance of a questionnaire is so uninviting as to preclude its receiving favorable attention. Moreover, many questionnaires are accompanied neither by letters of explanation nor by return postage.

Recently there came to the desks of many professional and business men an illustrated, well-printed questionnaire of fifteen pages in booklet form. Its title was "The Proving Ground of Public Opinion." Though it contained numerous questions, the answering of which required not only a good deal of time but really great deliberation, it brought the data desired owing largely to its pleasing appearance and its persuasive appeal. Many recipients of the questionnaire liked it so much that they asked that extra copies be sent to their friends! On the first page the following letter appeared:

This questionnaire is sent you in behalf of a leading group of automobile manufacturers who are keenly alert to the necessity of having their products conform to the customer's tastes and desires.\*

It has been the aim to make the questionnaire interesting and informative from your viewpoint as a user, and it is felt that the time and effort you devote to it may prove helpful to you when you select your next car. (With this thought in mind an extra copy is being enclosed for your files.)

We realize that many persons look upon requests of this nature as nuisances. Yet the fact remains that these sophisticated individuals are the very ones whose ideas are worth the most in dictating future design.

In fact, this questionnaire is designed to appeal to those who usually ignore such requests for information. It is so easy to read that you can get the idea without any reading, and no writing is necessary unless you should feel the "urge." As a matter of fact, the answers may be checked off with less effort than it takes to work a crossword puzzle.

Please give us your answers to these questions—you will find them interesting—soon so that we may use them promptly. Use the stamped, addressed envelope enclosed for your convenience.

\*The names of these manufacturers will be furnished on request.

Custom and usage have settled the question. Many persons have rebelled against the idea of "drinking" a liquid often containing substantial solids. For this reason the term "eat soup" has quite naturally established itself as the proper alternative.

In all the literature on the subject, in textbooks, newspaper editorials, magazine articles written by dietitians, etc., "eat soup" is the invariable expression that is employed. To cite a few examples:

TIME (Magazine) September 2 issue of last year:  
"He brought with him from his studies the idea of producing canned soup, ready to eat."

Arthur Brisbane, well-known editorial writer:  
"Eat soup once a day."

Ida Bailey Allen, noted household economist,  
writes: "Soups should be eaten, not drunk."

We have gone into this subject at length with you because we appreciate your interest in our products which prompted you to write to us. Let us thank you again for your letter.

Very truly yours,

### *Refusing Information*

A brief, courteous note giving the reason for the refusal of the request is all that is needed. Letters giving lengthy explanations in an apologetic manner are as much to be avoided as curt and negative notes of refusal. Letters refusing information usually contain

- (1) a statement of regret and
- (2) the reason for refusal.

Dear Sir:

*The  
wrong  
way:*

Your favor of May 1 at hand. Beg to state that we cannot comply with your request.

Yours very truly,

Dear Sir:

*The  
right  
way:*

We are sorry not to be able to comply with your request of May 1, as to do so would be strictly against our policy.

Very truly yours,

4. Assume that you are the proprietor of a retail store selling woman's apparel. Write to Clogg & Company, Manufacturers of Umbrellas, 1033 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, asking them if they would be willing to send you by express a small assortment of ladies' black and colored umbrellas, you to have the privilege of returning within ten days from receipt of shipment any that do not meet with your approval. Also ask them for prices on dozen lots. Give references.
5. As the secretary of your local Chamber of Commerce, you are preparing a program for the club's Annual Booster Dinner. Write a letter to the president of a progressive advertising agency in a neighboring city asking him if he would be willing to talk at this dinner for about thirty minutes on "Ways and Means of Advertising a City." Say that you would be willing to pay all his expenses incurred in connection with this engagement. The dinner is to be held two weeks from this coming Thursday. Give the exact date and hour. Word your letter so that it will be difficult for your reader to refuse your request.
6. Write a letter to S. W. Douglas & Co., 180 North Dearborn Street, Chicago, Illinois, inquiring about the Ever-Ready Light, a portable electric lamp which you have seen advertised in your favorite magazine.

Say that you wish full information about the various uses to which this light may be put; also that you are a student and wish to use the lamp for reading and writing at night. Ask about different styles of the Ever-Ready Light, prices, etc. You have been unable to obtain this light in your local store, and you want to know if you could have it on trial for about a week.

7. Upon personal investigation you find that there is a considerable demand on the part of your fellow-students for used typewriters for rental purposes, a demand which is not now being met by any of the local typewriter agencies. You believe that it might be profitable for you to handle a typewriter agency during your spare time while attending college.

Write a well-known typewriter firm, stating the situation as given and asking for detailed information concerning their agency plan.

8. Assume that you were recently graduated from high school and that you are planning to attend college this coming fall. Since you have only about \$300 saved, it will be necessary for you to do some outside work to defray the greater part of your expenses.

Write to the Students' Employment Bureau of your favorite college or university to find out what chances you would have of securing a part-time position, and the price by the hour which is being paid there for stenographic work, which is the kind of work you can do well. Ask for any other relevant information that may seem important to you.

9. Assume that you are sales manager of the New York Sanitary Brush Company, 872 West 44th St., New York City, and that you are in need of several young salesmen. You have just seen the advertisement of the

International Salesmen's Institute, 28 High Street, Columbus, Ohio, a school that gives instruction in salesmanship by mail and in residence, in the *Salesman's Magazine*.

Write a letter to this school and ask it to recommend to you three or four of its best students. State just what kind of men you want and what you will pay them for their work.

10. You are an active member of the Commerce Club of the school which you attend. The president of your club has asked you to make a special study of the organization of high school commercial clubs in your state. This study is to include the extent to which such or similar clubs have been organized, their nature, their functions, etc. Moreover, you are to present the results at your investigation to your club very soon at one of its regular meetings.

You have just learned that the head of the commercial department of a certain city high school of your state has been instrumental in organizing a number of high school commercial clubs successfully. Write him and ask for complete information on this subject. Be sure to ask definite questions.

11. Assume that you are employed by S. W. Douglas & Co., the firm mentioned in problem 6, to answer inquiries similar to the one described. Write the answer. Give all the information asked for.

Make your prospect feel that the Ever-Ready Light is just what he needs and wants. Enclose a booklet in which a number of the uses of the Ever-Ready Light are illustrated. Suggest that your brass lamp with a 25-watt bulb would meet your prospect's requirements for reading and studying. As a manufacturer, you cannot sell direct to the consumer. Furthermore, you do not send lamps on trial. Refer the prospect to the Edison Store in his city, where Ever-Ready Lights may be inspected and purchased.

12. Assume that you are the chief correspondent in the students' employment bureau of your state university, and that the inquiry mentioned in problem 8 has come to you for attention. Write the answer. Enclose an application blank to be filled out and returned by the inquirer.

Say that the opportunities for doing stenographic work at the university are almost always good, and that such work is being paid for at the present time at the rate of about forty cents an hour. Suggest that the prospective student come to the university at least three or four days before the opening of the term, and that he call at your office immediately upon arrival in your city. Assure him of your coöperation in obtaining suitable employment.

Now draw up an application blank to be used in connection with inquiries such as the one just mentioned. This blank, properly filled out, should give information sufficient to guide you in helping the applicant to secure suitable employment. Included in this information should be the applicant's full name, his address, his telephone number, the number of

hours each day he wants to work, his fitness for the work, previous experience in it, etc., etc. Tabulate and arrange this information suitably on a letter sheet, so that it may be filed properly and referred to readily.

13. As president of the advertising firm mentioned in problem 5, accept the invitation to deliver a short address on "Ways and Means of Advertising a City," stating exact date of your arrival, etc., etc.
14. Assume that you are the advertising manager of the U. S. Motor Company, Detroit, Michigan. You have just received a letter from Petroleum News, 691 Hope Street, Los Angeles, California, asking you to place advertising in this trade publication.

Answer, asking the *Petroleum News* to send you full details relative to its circulation, showing geographical distribution, and any material that would show why your firm ought to advertise in the pages of this publication.

15. Write a reply to the letter asked for in problem 5, saying that you are unable to accept this particular invitation because of other pressing engagements.
16. As sales manager of Ogden & Leonard, Manufacturers of OL Gas Engines, Baltimore, Maryland, you have received a letter from Porfirio Valdez, Apartado 70, Mexico City, Mexico, asking for a catalogue and full information of your products, and giving as references the names of four large American business houses from which he is at present importing goods. Mr. Valdez is an importers' agent.

Answer his inquiry. Say that it has always been your policy to confine the sale of your goods to the United States, and that you do not care to solicit business outside of this country, although you know that there is a good deal of satisfactory business to be secured there. Congratulate your inquirer upon the character of houses in this country with which he is doing business. Being a Spanish-American, Mr. Valdez will appreciate a somewhat formal but very courteous letter.

17. You are the correspondent of the Nome Auto Truck Company, Syracuse, New York. In your morning's mail was the following letter from the New York State Retail Coal Merchants' Association, 150 Lee Building, Brooklyn, New York:

Gentlemen:

I beg to acknowledge receipt of yours of July 12th. I regret very much to hear that you have decided not to exhibit the Nome Truck at our Convention this year, at Richfield Springs. I do not remember a Convention, since I have been identified with the Association, that we did not have a Nome Truck exhibited. Had hoped to have that privilege this year again.

All indications point to an unusual attendance at Richfield Springs, both on account of its central location, and because of conditions in

the trade which will bring about the attendance of a large number of retail merchants in this State. I wish that you might be led to reconsider your decision and be represented at the Convention, even were it only with literature and a representative of your sales force.

Very sincerely yours,

Criticize this letter and rewrite it in better form. Then answer it by saying that you have decided not to exhibit this year.

18. Write the answer to problem 10. Assume that you are in charge of the commercial department of your city high school. Answer all questions briefly but concisely. Make use of the following supposed facts:

You organized your high school commercial efficiency club two years ago. All members of the high school commercial department belong to the club. No dues are charged. Meetings are held once a week. At these meetings local business men and members of the club discuss business methods, and shorthand, typewriting, and rapid calculation contests are provided. Social gatherings are held once a month. The special aim of your club is to give all members an opportunity to come in close contact with the business men of your city by visiting them in their offices, stores, and other places of business, and by asking them to come to your school to talk about their methods of doing business successfully. Add anything else which may occur to you as being necessary to make your reply com-

## CHAPTER VII

### ORDERS

Orders are written requests made by one person, the buyer, asking another person, the seller, to send him goods. There is no written communication more important and more welcome to a business man than an order for goods, be it large or small. This is true because without orders there would be no business. Because of their importance, it is the invariable rule of the progressive business house to fill them in such a way that customers will be pleased. Customers can thus be inclined to place all their orders with one firm.

However, orders can be filled promptly and intelligently only if the buyer gives the seller definite directions. To avoid embarrassing misunderstandings and costly delays, letters ordering goods should enable their recipient to send you exactly what is wanted, and in the manner and at the time it is wanted, without having to write for further information or instructions. Orders should therefore be reasonably short, clear, specific, and complete.

Order blanks should be used when available. When the order is written out in full, its component parts should be properly paragraphed, each item written on a separate line so as to make the reading and filling of the order easy. This may be accomplished by giving all essential information in the following order:

1. Give specific directions concerning shipment of goods:
  - (a) Where to ship (complete mailing or shipping address, made up of heading of letter and signature)
  - (b) How to ship (whether by parcel post, express, freight, etc.)
  - (c) When to ship (exact date when goods are wanted or needed)
2. Give definite information concerning the goods themselves:
  - (a) How much to send (state quantity of goods desired)
  - (b) What to send (describe goods; give catalogue number, special trade-name, size, shape, color, style, price, etc.)
3. Make reference to remittance for goods (state whether or not you are enclosing money and, if so, in what form; otherwise, say how you intend to pay for goods)



4. Give such additional information as you deem necessary to enable recipient of order to understand your wants better and to serve you more efficiently (if you need goods badly, emphasize this fact here; if you are entitled to special prices or discounts, say so here)

## AN ORDER WRITTEN BY AN INDIVIDUAL

Where to  
ship:

2509 Hearst Avenue,  
Phoenix, Arizona,  
September 18, 19—.

National Cloak & Suit Company,  
Seventh Avenue, 24th and 25th Sts.,  
New York City.

Gentlemen:

How and  
when to  
ship:

Please send me immediately by Parcel Post the following goods selected from The "National," this year's Fall & Winter:

1 Pair of shoes, Black Satin, No. 30 D 2407, size 5, width D.....	\$5.29
Postage.....	.10

How much  
and what  
to ship:

1 Blanket Cloth, No. 19 D 855, Copenhagen blue, size 36.....	\$3.98
Postage.....	.08

3 Children's Handkerchiefs, Jap Silk, 8 D 213.....	.23
Postage.....	.02

Total.....	\$9.70
------------	--------

Reference  
to pay-  
ment:

I enclose money order for \$9.70 in payment of this order.

Yours truly,

To whom  
to ship: Encl.

(Signed) Wm. F. Amos.

## AN ORDER WRITTEN BY A BUSINESS HOUSE

NOTE.—Such an order almost always has a number and makes use of trade names.

Gentlemen:

Please enter our order No. 2368 for the following:

Statement  
of goods  
wanted:

2 Madrid, G-2200, Size 20"24" at 43.00....	\$86.00
2 Maderna, G-5020, Size 36" x 36" at 45.00	90.00
Total.....	\$176.00

*Shipping  
and billing  
instructions:*

We shall appreciate your shipping these goods so that they will reach us not later than thirty days from date of order, billing them f. o. b. Camden, at 2/30, n/60—your usual terms.

Very truly yours,

### *Acknowledgment of Orders*

#### *1. Asking the customer for more information before filling the order.*

When an order is indefinite or incomplete in important respects, it becomes necessary for the business house to ask the buyer for further information so that the order may be filled satisfactorily. To avoid delay, the letter asking the customer to supply additional data relative to the order should if possible be written the day the order is received. It should be a courteous, tactful, and brief request for definite, essential information. If certain statements in the order are not clear, these should be repeated in the letter and the customer asked to explain them. Oftentimes accurate and definite information may be obtained by sending the customer an order blank which he is asked to fill out.

In no case should the customer be blamed for an indefinite or incomplete order, however much he may be at fault. On the contrary, appreciation of the business given should be expressed in the letter, and the customer should not only be tactfully requested to furnish the desired information, but he should also be made to feel that by complying with the seller's request definitely and immediately, he will get exactly the kind of goods and service he wants and at the time he wants them. In other words, letters asking the customer for more information concerning his order are written to avoid costly delays and good-will-destroying misunderstandings, and to render more intelligent and satisfactory service. They may be built on the following paragraph plan:

- (1) Thank the customer for his order.
- (2) Courteously ask for the information you desire.
- (3) Impress upon the reader the fact that data asked for will enable you to give him first-class service.

### ILLUSTRATION

Mrs. J. C. Hansen,  
Cedar Falls, Tenn.

My dear Madam:

*Thank cus-  
tomer for  
order:*

Thank you very much for your order, which we received to-day.

*Ask for  
informa-  
tion:*

In addition to the information given in your letter, we should appreciate your giving us on the enclosed blank the catalogue number, size, color, and price of the shoes you desire. Do you wish them sent by parcel post or by express? Also please enclose a money order for \$5.00, which is the deposit required on all mail orders.

*Assure  
customer of  
prompt  
service:*

Your sending us this information together with the necessary deposit will enable us to fill your order promptly and satisfactorily.

Sincerely yours,

2. *Acknowledging orders received from old customers.* Orders should be acknowledged the day they are received, unless they are small and shipped immediately. In the letter of acknowledgment the customer is first of all thanked for the order and then told how and when it will be shipped. If the goods have to be made up first, if they are partly or temporarily out of stock, or if shipment is likely to be delayed for some other reason, then the customer should be given prompt assurance that definite action is being taken to get the goods into his hands as quickly as possible. Show your appreciation of the business which your customer has given you by rendering "service plus." Build up his confidence in your house and your goods by furnishing him the kind and quality of goods he wants at the time he wants them. In addition, let him know that you stand behind every single dollar's worth of goods you ship out. Put some strong sales talk in your acknowledgment. Keep your old customer "sold" on every order which you ship him. This will tie him closer to your firm and will make for "repeat business."

The contents of a letter of acknowledgment may be arranged in the following manner:

1. Express appreciation of order received and restate it.
2. Say definitely what action you are taking concerning shipment of goods ordered.
3. Emphasize service to customer.

## A

(An effective letter of acknowledgment)

Gentlemen:

*Express  
apprecia-  
tion of  
order and  
restate it:*

Thank you very much for your order of April 27 for

6 No. 442	Pint Vacuum Coffee Pots, Nickel Plated
6 No. 457	1-1/2 pt. Chocolate Pots, Nickel Plated
6 Fillers	for Pint Coffee Pots, Nickel Plated
6 Fillers	for 1-1/2 Pint Chocolate Pots, Nickel Plated

*State action taken:* These goods will be shipped to you by United States express this morning and should reach you not later than Thursday morning.

*Sales talk:* Wherever used properly, our vacuum products have proved very popular, giving complete satisfaction. Each vacuum article is rigidly tested before shipment, and is guaranteed to keep water steaming hot for thirty-six hours or ice cold for fifty-four hours regardless of outside temperature.

*Emphasize service:* Your customers will enjoy using vacuum products because of their convenience, and you will find them profitable to handle. Let us know when we may again be of service to you.

Very truly yours,

B

(Acknowledgment of an order received from a retail customer for goods which cannot be furnished. It very effectively suggests and makes easy the purchase of goods similar to those ordered.)

Dear Madam:

*Express thanks:* Many thanks for your order of November 5.

*State definitely reason why you are unable to fill order:* We should like very much to furnish the Superior Tongueless Boots, but careful and thoughtful buyers like yourself, quickly realizing their exceptional value, swamped us with orders. It is now impossible to secure an additional supply. For this reason our stock, which we thought would last several months, is now completely sold. We are unable to say just when this merchandise can be furnished.

*Suggest purchase of other, similar goods:* Fortunately we have in stock a shoe lower in price, but similar in quality, style, and appearance, the Brussels Elite Boots, illustrated and described on page sixty-four of our latest catalogue, under number 2N889. They are all ready to be sent to you, but we thought it best to take the matter up with you before shipping.

*Make it easy for reader to order; emphasize service:* Just write the catalogue number of the shoes and the size you wear on the special order blank enclosed, and mail it to us. A pair of these ultra-fashionable shoes will be rushed to you at once. In case you should want to make another selection, or order other goods, write the catalogue number, size, and price on the order blank, and it will be given the same personal attention.

*Reassure customer:* Remember, of course, you are fully protected by our guarantee of "money back if not satisfied"; so that if your new selection should not be just what you want, simply return it for a refund or exchange.

Very truly yours,

In acknowledging routine orders received from old customers, printed post-card forms with blank spaces for the date and the number of the order are frequently used:

El Paso, Texas, \_\_\_\_\_19—.

Gentlemen:

We acknowledge with thanks receipt of your order No. \_\_\_\_\_, of \_\_\_\_\_.

It will have our immediate attention, and the goods will be forwarded to you just as soon as possible.

Should you wish to write us concerning this order, please refer to No. \_\_\_\_\_.

We thank you for your patronage and hope that the goods will prove satisfactory.

Very truly yours,

When an old customer sends in a large number of orders during the year, forms similar to the one given above may be used to good advantage. However, when acknowledging orders from new customers, or large and important orders from old customers, it is best to write a personal letter, thus giving the acknowledgment the desired personal touch.

3. *Acknowledging orders received from new customers.* When you have received a first order from a customer, write him a personal letter thanking him and welcoming him into the circle of satisfied buyers of your product or service. Tell him that you are taking a personal interest in his order, that your firm is 100 per cent behind the product or service it sells, and that you will help him in promoting the sale of your products or in getting the utmost satisfaction or use out of them.

That is exactly what he wants to know. In other words, when acknowledging an order from a new customer, make it easy for him to send you repeat orders—pave the way for future business. Satisfy the new customer the first time so that he will become a constant buyer.

## ILLUSTRATIONS

A

✓

Gentlemen:

*Welcoming  
new cus-  
tomer:*

It is with extreme pleasure that we enter your name on our books as a customer. Be assured that we will gladly do everything in our power to make Guaranty Hosiery profitable to you, so that it will become a real aid in your general business.

*Emphasizing service:* You will from time to time receive offers of selling helps and pointers on trade stimulation, and we hope you will find them useful.

*Soliciting customer's coöperation:* We gladly welcome any suggestions which our customers make relating to the manufacture, advertising, or selling of Guaranty Hosiery, and if any practical method occurs to you by which we can be more useful, we hope you will tell us about it.

Yours very truly,

A new customer receiving this letter has every reason to feel that his order is in the right hands and that he will be given intelligent and business-building service.

B

✓ Gentlemen:

Order given Mr.-----

*Welcome customer:* It is gratifying to know that you have decided to handle Worthy tires, and we at the factory want to thank you for the substantial order given to our representative mentioned above.

*Emphasize dealer service and coöperation:* You no doubt appreciate how essential it is that a salesman have the hearty co-operation of the factory in helping him to keep his promises to customers. At the factory we have a department known as the Sales Promotion Department. This is at your service. The purpose of this department is to see that our customers are given all assistance promised by our salesmen.

*Solicit customer's coöperation:* The Sales Promotion Department is purely a customers' department—YOUR department. We want to lend that personal aid which is due you. We want you to feel free to write us at any time we can be of assistance to you in supplying your needs in the way of advertising or in any other way by which we can further your sales.

*Inject some "selling talk" into letter:* Your interests are our interests. Worthy tires are quality tires. They are sold to you as such and you in turn sell them to your customers as quality tires. Their superior quality creates their own demand.

*Close naturally:* Again we thank you for your order. We hope it will be followed by others in due time.

Very truly yours,

The personal tone of this letter, in which the service the writer sells is so positively emphasized, cannot fail to cause the reader to expect that service to be in all respects agreeable.

## C

My dear Mr. Brown:

*Welcome  
to new  
customer:*

It is a pleasure indeed to know that you will visit our Hotel during the period of the National Retailers' Convention, and we have reserved for you a most comfortable room and bath.

*Emphasis  
on personal  
service:*

We want you to know that on your arrival here, your room will be in readiness and during your stay no effort will be spared to make you most comfortable in every way.

*Cordial  
close:*

I should like very much to have the pleasure of meeting you during your stay with us to assist you in any way that I can.

Yours very truly,

### *Following Up the First Order Shipped to a New Customer*

The ever-increasing cost of doing business and the growing stress of competition have taught the progressive business man the value of making the new customer a permanent one. By no means should a firm's interest in a new customer cease with the shipment of the first order. On the contrary, a week or ten days after the order has been shipped, a follow-up letter should be sent to the new customer for the purpose of ascertaining the degree of satisfaction with the goods sold him, and of bolstering up and strengthening his confidence in the writer's goods, policies, and firm, and of promoting good-will in general.

Letters such as the following are designed to tie the customer closer to the house. They should make impossible the existence in the mind of the customer of little, costly misunderstandings or confidence-destroying doubts.

## ILLUSTRATIONS

### A

(Letter sent to new customer a week or ten days after receipt  
of first shipment)

Dear Sir:

This is to express the hope that your recent purchase is giving entire satisfaction and that we may hereafter have the pleasure of numbering you among our regular customers for Guaranty Hosiery.

As a dealer in hosiery you want the best possible merchandise, fair dealings, and reasonable prices. That is the basis on which we secured your first order, and that is the way in which we shall try to hold your patronage.

A satisfied customer is the best advertisement we can have, and our proudest boast is that we get a large portion of our trade just in that way. But if now or at any time in the future you feel that you have any cause for dissatisfaction, let us hear from you at once, and we will go to any reasonable length to make it right. That's what we are here for!

We want more business--no doubt about that--but now that you are on our books, we would rather keep you there than add three others.

Is it unduly imposing on your good nature to ask you to use the enclosure to let us know whether everything is all right up to this time, and whether we may hope to have the pleasure of doing more business with you in the future?

We shall appreciate this courtesy very much.

Very truly yours,

B      ✓

(Second follow-up letter sent a week or ten days after the first follow-up letter)

Dear Sir:

You purchased some hosiery from us. We trust it was the best buy you have ever made.

If it did not please you in every way, tell us about it, please.

If now, or in the future, anybody in this organization does not treat you with perfect courtesy, and sympathetic appreciation of your business, write us about it.

This letter to-day is simply to impress you with the fact that our interest in you is just as keen now as it was before you became a Guaranty customer.

If you are interested in having any of our counter or window displays, or electrotypes for newspaper advertising, please write us and we will send them to you at once.

Yours very truly,



## PROBLEMS

*Writing Letters Ordering Goods*

1. Write to the McAllister Tailoring Company, 857 McAllister Street, Chicago, Illinois, ordering from their Special Bargain Price List: one pair, soft toe service shoes, tan, size 8, list No. 3B110, \$3.39; one pair, 16 inch Hi-Cut Boots, size 8, No. 3B112, \$7.39; one pair men's felt house slippers, size 9, No. 3B120, \$1.49; two flannel shirts, size 16, gray, No. 3B636, \$3.89. Enclose a deposit of \$2 with the order, which is to be sent C. O. D., all transportation charges to be prepaid by the seller.
2. Prepare an order of no fewer than six items selected from the mail-order catalogue of a firm with which you are familiar. Show prices and ask that order be sent C. O. D.
3. Criticize, then rewrite the following order:

Vallejo, Cal. 9/24/—

Alameda Dept. Store,  
Frisco, Cal.

Dear Sirs:

Please send me immediately 1 Alarm Clock, one pair of tennis shoes, size 7 1/2, one Spalding tennis racket, and a half dozen tennis balls. Rush these goods to me, as I need them badly.

Yours truly,  
(Signed) Earl Shattuck

4. The birthday of a friend of yours is approaching. Write a letter to the publisher of your favorite magazine, asking him to send the periodical to your friend for a year. Enclose the subscription price. Give address to which the magazine is to be sent. Say that you wish your friend to receive the first copy on his or her birthday, which you state in your order.
5. Assume that you are a country school-teacher. Place an order with a textbook publisher for twenty-five copies of a book which you name definitely. Ask for a desk copy. Furthermore, tell him to include another book which you name, and on which you are entitled to the special teacher's discount of 5 per cent. Have the total amount of the bill charged against account of school district.
6. From the latest monthly list of new Victor phonograph-radio records, published by your local music dealer in the newspaper, select at least half a dozen records. State price, etc., and enclose the full amount of your order, excluding transportation charges.
7. Write a letter to a well-known typewriter company, placing an order for a certain typewriter. This machine is to be shipped to you by express not later than a week from the date of the order. You intend to pay for it on the instalment plan. Enclose the first monthly payment.

8. As a business man write an order for no fewer than eight different items of certain goods which you need in your business. In ordering use trade names and give your order number. State terms, etc., according to which goods are to be billed to you.
9. You are about to go on an extended camping trip in the mountains. Send an order to the Spiro Outfitting Company, Yosemite Building, Chicago, Illinois, for a complete camping outfit. Name all items in detail, giving complete description and prices. Enclose \$10 and ask that remainder of bill be collected on delivery. Be sure to make your order complete.
10. As a farmer you are in need of an incubator and a gasoline engine. Place an order for these articles with a mail-order house, enclosing a deposit of \$25. These goods are to be shipped to you by fast freight. Give shipping point and other essential information.
11. Place an order with Tiffany & Company, New York, for stationery to be used by you as a gift for a woman of refinement. Give all details necessary to enable Tiffany & Company to fill your order satisfactorily. Enclose initial deposit of not less than \$10.
12. As leader of the orchestra of your school place an order with the mail-order department of the Alhambra Music House, 4678 Euclid Avenue, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, for a No. 14766 Soprano Saxophone in C, Finish C, \$115, and one Lyric Concert Horn No. 510, Finish KV, complete \$67.50. Both articles are listed in their catalogue No. 120. Their terms are: one-fourth cash, balance in ten equal monthly instalments. Enclose a money-order for the correct amount, and ask that the instruments be shipped you immediately. Add anything else which you may deem necessary to enable the reader to fill your order intelligently.
13. As a retail lumber dealer, place an order for various items of lumber with a wholesale lumber company. Be sure to give exact specifications, etc.
14. Write the following orders, using your own name and selecting the business houses for yourself:
  - (a) Tickets for three persons on the All-American Steamer *George Washington*, New York to Bordeaux, June 15. Give additional necessary information.
  - (b) A list of groceries for your camp in the woods where you intend to spend two weeks with a friend.
  - (c) A list of at least six accessories for your automobile.

*Acknowledging Receipt of Orders and Asking for More Information*

15. As manager of the Alameda Department Store, acknowledge receipt of the order given in problem 3. You cannot fill this order because it is incomplete in various respects. Write your customer for a more complete description of the goods, the prices he is willing to pay, etc.
16. You are the manager of the mail-order department of the Universal Music Palace, Manufacturers and Importers of Everything Musical, your

city. You have just received an order from Max Nickell, 519 West 152d Street, New York City, for a Vienna Hertz Accordion. You cannot fill this order because you have been unable to procure accordions, which are manufactured abroad, owing to the existing labor conditions in Europe.

Write a letter to Mr. Nickell, and make these facts known to him. Say that you will notify him as soon as you are able to quote prices on accordions. Suggest his selecting merchandise for purchase from your latest catalogue which you are sending him under another cover.

17. Assume that you are the mail sales manager of Lane & Scott's Music Store, 859 Lincoln Street, Seattle, Washington, and that you have received an order without deposit for twenty pieces of sheet music from Miss Georgia Trogler, Hoquiam, Washington. In referring to your books you find that Miss Trogler has no regular account with you. It is your policy not to send goods to new customers unless they are prepaid.

You are now asked to write a letter to Miss Trogler, explaining your policy and saying that if she will remit the amount of her order, which you state, you will at once send her the sheet music.

Add that she may open a charge account (to be paid monthly) by making written request and by submitting, in the customary manner, the names of two business houses to which you may write concerning her financial responsibility.

18. Willard Winston, R. F. D. 5, Center Junction, Iowa, sent an order for photographic supplies totaling \$5.50 to the Owl Drug Store, Davenport, Iowa. He enclosed a post-office money-order for only \$5, apparently assuming that this firm prepaid parcel post charges.

Assume that this order was received the day before yesterday, and that you are the correspondent of the Owl Drug Store. Write Mr. Winston a letter, asking him to send you the difference between the amount of his money-order and the total amount of his order. Express regret for the delay in sending the goods ordered, at the same time stating that you cannot open a charge account for the small amount involved. Add anything else which may occur to you as being necessary to make your letter complete.

19. You are employed as correspondent by the Wallingford Wholesale Hardware Company, Detroit, Michigan. Two days ago you received for immediate shipment from the Funk Hardware Company, 687 Logan Street, Brownsville, Illinois, their order No. B-544 for various items, all of which you are able to supply except one dozen Nail Hammers #CA80.

You have experienced much difficulty in procuring steel for the manufacture of these nail hammers, and as yet you have no promise of delivery from the steel mills.

Write the Funk Hardware Company, making use of these supposed facts and asking permission to substitute Nail Hammer #CA81, which is

the most popular of your nail hammers, and which you have in stock, for the one ordered.

20. As correspondent of McLain Brothers, Men's Furnishings, 875 Wells Street, Chicago, Illinois, you are asked to acknowledge receipt of the following order, dated four days ago, from the Model Clothing Company, Mitchell, South Dakota:

1 doz. 351/52 Belts with buckle .....	\$15.00
1 doz. "Invisible" Suspenders .....	7.50
1 gross 837 Back Collar-Buttons .....	8.00
1/2 doz. C-131 Cigarette Cases .....	22.00

You are about to ship all items listed in this order except the 837 Back Collar-Buttons. You are entirely out of them, and cannot definitely promise when you will have them in stock again. However, you have a good supply of Collar-Buttons 840 on hand, which kind sells at \$9 a gross. This style is an improvement over 837 in that it is made in one piece, and therefore more convenient than Collar-Button 837, which consists of two pieces.

Write to your customer, making use of these data and suggesting that he give you permission to substitute the slightly higher-priced collar-buttons for those ordered.

### *Acknowledging Orders from Old Customers and Others*

21. Criticize, then rewrite the following acknowledgment:

McCracken & Company,  
Opportunity, W. Va.

Gentlemen:

Yours under date of Dec. 30th with Order #1405 received. Note that your order calls for fifty salesmen's order books, but as 125 books is the minimum quantity which can be run on our automatic presses, we are increasing your order to this amount.

Trusting same will be satisfactory, and thanking you for the order, we remain

Very truly yours,

Victoria Manifolding Book Co.

22. Two weeks ago to-day, Geo. F. Richardson, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, placed an order for an assortment of gloves with the Julius Eddy Company, 875 Fourth Avenue, New York City, to be shipped two months from to-day. The latter firm is able to ship the various items, except gloves style 2482 in beaver and covert, the production of which colors has been discontinued for the remainder of this season, and is therefore substituting style 2490, which is the nearest number and style to 2482.

Write a letter welcoming Miss Wharton as a student to the Lincoln Correspondence Schools. Suggest that she plan her work and time so as to send you at least one lesson a month. Send her under another cover instructions for her first lesson.

26. As manager of the Stewart Hotel, Bancroft, Maine, prepare a letter of welcome which is to be sent to guests who have made reservations for rooms for the first time.
27. As chief correspondent of the mail-order department of the Joseph Atwater Company, Wholesale Dealers in Men's Furnishings, 892 Schiller Street, Rockford, Illinois, you have just received a small order from H. H. Mueller, East Moline, Illinois, for garters and hosiery for immediate shipment.

Mr. Mueller is a new customer and has no credit account with you. For this reason you cannot ship the goods unless he sends you the amount of the order, \$15.75, less your regular ten-day discount of 1 per cent, or 16¢, in this case, in advance.

Making use of these supposed facts, write a letter acknowledging receipt of Mr. Mueller's order.

28. As assistant to the manager of the Duro Furniture Company, your city, you have just received a mail order for an office desk from C. B. Wilson, a resident of a neighboring town.

In view of the fact that this desk is to be purchased on the monthly payment plan, you are referring the order to your credit department for approval. You will give the customer the exact shipping date later.

Write a letter to Mr. Wilson stating the data just given. Make it complete.

29. Assume that you are assistant to the sales manager of The Rethaen Company, Manufacturers of Soaps and Toilet Preparations, Cincinnati, Ohio. The Gamble Drug Company, Cedarville, Ohio, has just requested you to ship them two dozen tubes of Rethaen Shaving Cream:

Because of frequent loss of or damage to small-lot shipments, you are compelled to ensure orders. Moreover, the average cost of following up a single sales entry with the details, shipping records, etc., is in excess of fifteen cents, which is more than your profit on many small transactions.

In the case of a new product you frequently fill small orders so as to relieve the jobber of the necessity of ordering large quantities before the market is well established. However, these conditions do not apply to established lines of goods, which have been on the market for some time, and for which there is a steady demand.

Write the Gamble Drug Company, using the information just stated. Enclose your current price-list. Suggest an assorted order for goods

Everlasting. For these reasons you have taken special precaution to make certain that everything connected with the sale of the typewriters on this order might be satisfactory.

33. Four weeks have passed since you shipped the order referred to in problem 32, and two weeks since you wrote the order follow-up letter there asked for. You have not heard from your customer since you shipped the order.

Prepare a suitable second letter to be sent to the Eklund Business College. Ask for a statement of opinion regarding the service and satisfaction which the Everlasting Typewriters have given so far, especially as compared with the service and satisfaction given by the other two makes of typewriters used in this school. Emphasize your willingness to be of service to the customer.

## PROBLEMS IN WRITING LETTERS OF INTRODUCTION

1. One of your classmates has just obtained a position with a firm, but he is not acquainted with any one of its members. The president of the firm has known you for eight years. Prepare a letter to introduce your classmate to the president.
2. A personal friend of yours is moving to a city where an old college chum of yours lives. Write a letter introducing the former to the latter.
3. Assume that you are the secretary of your local chamber of commerce and that a student from a neighboring college or university, who is making a study of the opportunities for employment which college men have with real estate firms, has asked you to give him a letter of introduction to a prominent real estate firm. Write the letter.
4. Assume that you are the employment secretary of your school. A student in the School of Commerce has just asked you to give him a letter of introduction to the general manager of a local advertising agency, with which the former is seeking suitable employment during the approaching summer vacation. Prepare the letter.
5. You are the secretary of your local Young Men's Christian Association. Your friend James Glover, recently graduated from college, intends to go to Chicago, Illinois, to make a special study of the work done by the Chicago Y. M. C. A. He has asked you for a letter of introduction to the general secretary of the Chicago Y. M. C. A. Write the letter.
6. Assume that you are professor of economics in your college or university. Your friend, Harold Miller, who is employed as an artist in the Advertising Department of the Ayer & Rice Company, your city, is interested in attending some extension courses in advertising at your school. He has asked you for a letter of introduction to Professor Wayne Beck, who is in charge of the advertising courses. Prepare the letter.
7. Your friend, Charles B. Warner, employment manager of The Simplex Manufacturing Company, Dayton, Ohio, has worked out a system of employment management which has proved very successful for a number of years. Since you are reorganizing the employment department of your own firm, of which you are superintendent, you are naturally interested in your friend's employment methods. Though he has invited you several times to visit him at Dayton so that you might make a personal study of his methods, you have been unable to accept his invitation because of pressure of work.

You have just now decided to send Wallace J. Tilden, the head of your employment department, to Dayton, to get first-hand information relative to the methods of employment used by The Simplex Manufacturing Company. Write a letter introducing Mr. Tilden to your friend in Dayton.

8. A friend of yours is making a business and pleasure trip to Honolulu, where you have numerous friends, having resided there for a number of years. He is asking you for letters of introduction to some of your Honolulu friends. Comply with his request.
9. Write a letter introducing a fellow bank-employee (teller) who is leaving for New York City to attend the School of Commerce, Accounts, and Finance of New York University, to a friend of yours, who is assistant cashier in a bank in New York City.
10. Assume that a student from a neighboring college or university has come to you, the sales manager of the Trogler & Better Department Store, your city, to obtain data concerning your system of training salespeople, which you have just given him. He now asks you to introduce him by letter to some one else who may be able to aid him further in his search for reliable information. Grant his request.
11. Criticize, then rewrite the following letter of introduction:

Dean Moe,  
Statewide Agriculture College,  
Statewide, America.

Dear Sir:

Mr. R. S. Johnston of 1120 E. 45th street, Monticello, Illinois, a former graduate of S. A. C., and a very personal friend of mine, wishes advice and information on the extension course in sales and advertising, given at night in your college. If you can help him in any way, it will be very much appreciated by us both.

Very truly yours,

### *Letters of Reference*

Every responsible business house requires an applicant for a position to give the names of former employers and persons to whom it may refer concerning his work and character. Letters of reference asking for certain necessary information relative to the applicant's character and ability are then addressed to those whose names he has furnished.

Like all letters requesting personal information, letters of reference are brief, courteous, and to the point. They may be written in accordance with the following outline:

1. State the purpose or general subject of the letter at once and briefly.
2. Ask courteously for definite information.
3. Say that the information furnished will be appreciated.

} These may  
often be  
combined.



## ILLUSTRATION

✓  
Gentlemen:

*Stating general subject of letter:* Chester Shellberg, who states that he has been employed as follow-up clerk in your shop-accounting department from November 1, 1928, to July 25, 1936, has just applied to us for a position in our Accounting Department. He has given your name as reference.

*Making request for information:* To enable us to determine Mr. Shellberg's fitness for this position, will you please write us concerning his character, his habits, his record while in your employ, and his reason for leaving you.

*Saying information will be appreciated:* We shall appreciate your giving us this information as soon as you can, so that we may better judge the applicant's fitness for our work.

Very truly yours,

Printed information blanks which the person given as reference is asked to fill out, or lists of questions concerning the applicant, are often enclosed in letters of reference. In that case, it is necessary for the letter only to

- (1) state its purpose and subject at once and briefly and
- (2) ask for information and say that it will be appreciated.

✓  
ILLUSTRATION

Gentlemen:

*Stating purpose of letter:* We have an application from L. Gilbert, employed by you as Assistant Sales Manager for a period of two years up to about a month ago, for the position of Sales Manager.

*Expressing appreciation:* Since we are seriously considering Mr. Gilbert's application, we should very much appreciate your answering the questions on the enclosed reference blank, and also your giving us what other information you can concerning his fitness for this important position.

Yours very truly,

## PROBLEMS IN WRITING LETTERS OF REFERENCE

1. As correspondent in the employment department of the Sternberg Film Company, 416 Filmland Road, Los Angeles, California, you have just received an application from Miss Edith Rice for the position of secretary

to the vice-president of your firm. Among the references given by her appears the name of the Johnson-White Film Corporation, 25 Golden Gate Avenue, San Francisco, California, by which firm Miss Rice was employed as stenographer for a period of three and a half years. (Give exact dates.)

Write a letter of reference to this firm concerning Miss Rice's record as stenographer, etc.

2. When making personal application for the position of night watchman, Edward Little gave the name of the Eastern Commission Company, Minneapolis, Minnesota, a firm which recently discharged him, presumably because of lack of work. As manager of the firm to which application was made, write the Eastern Commission Company for the applicant's qualifications and also for the cause of his discharge. Ask a number of definite questions regarding the past record of the applicant.
3. Elizabeth Gordon, just graduated from your local High School of Commerce, has applied to you, a lawyer, for a position as office secretary. She gives the name of Walter J. Harvey, principal of the High School of Commerce, for reference. Prepare a letter to be sent to Mr. Harvey concerning Miss Gordon's qualifications for the position she wishes to secure.
4. George J. Worthington, who is about to be graduated from the School of Commerce of your state university, where he has majored in business English, salesmanship, and advertising, has written you, the manager of the Johnson-Francis Advertising Agency, your city, asking to be considered for a position as copy-writer.

Write a letter to the dean of the School of Commerce of your state university, whose name the applicant gave as reference, for information about the latter.

5. (a) Prepare a list of not fewer than ten and not more than fifteen questions which might be asked of persons to whom applicants for positions as salesmen have referred you for information. Make questions brief and arrange them in logical order.  
(b) Prepare a list of questions to be asked of applicants for the position of junior accountant.  
(c) Prepare a similar list for the position of stenographer.  
(d) Prepare a third list of questions for the position of credit correspondent.
6. Prepare a one-page blank to be used in connection with letters of reference and to be filled out by persons whose names will be given you for reference. This blank should have proper headings and subheadings. All questions should be definite, to the point, numbered, listed in order of their importance, and attractively arranged on the page. Leave space for special remarks and for signature of the person giving the information asked for.

7. As employment manager of a local firm selling hardware, you recently sent to Roland Alexander, salesman, living in a neighboring city, an application blank, which he has just filled out and returned to you. The information given on the blank indicates that the applicant has been in the employ of three different firms during the past five years. He has given the names of two of these firms for reference, but has omitted the name of his third employer, a prominent wholesale hardware company, for some unknown reason.

Write a letter to the Smith Wholesale Hardware Company, Battle Creek, Michigan, for information concerning Roland Alexander's record with this particular firm.

8. You are the manager of the credit department of Chalfant Brothers, a men's clothing store, 867 Lake Street, Boise, Idaho. Miss Winnifred Mercier, your city, has just made written application to you for a position as your stenographer and secretary. Among the references given by her is the name of a personal friend of yours, whose secretary Miss Mercier was for a period of six months.

Write him a more or less personal letter concerning the applicant's ability, character, and record.

9. In the letter to be written in solution of problem 3 you neglected to ask the reference there given about the applicant's ability to mingle with people, which in view of the fact that she is to receive your clients, is an important factor for you to consider before engaging her.

Write another letter to Mr. Harvey to get this information, which was not contained in his reply to your first letter.

10. William F. Anderson has applied to you, the Manager of the Winner Fountain Pen Company, your city, for a position as clerk in your shipping department. Send a letter to one of his former employers (a prominent wholesale grocery house in an adjacent city) to whom he has referred you for information. Enclose a blank to be filled out by the reference.

### *Letters of Recommendation*

It is the purpose of letters of recommendation to give to a prospective employer in a candid, conservative, and positive manner specific and distinct facts regarding a person's business history, thus personally recommending an applicant for a certain position.

Because of their general nature and the ease with which they may be obtained, "To Whom It May Concern" letters are regarded by most employers as of little value. To make a letter recommending some one for a position effective, it should be addressed specifically to some person.

Whether general or personal, letters of recommendation should contain the following essentials:

1. Brief statement of subject and purpose of letter.
2. Résumé of person's history of employment, qualifications, etc.
3. Candid statement of writer's personal judgment of person's qualifications and probable fitness for position.
4. Final recommendation of former employee.

## ILLUSTRATION

✓ Dear Sir:

*Subject of letter:* In compliance with your request of May 3, I am pleased to give my opinion of Nelson B. Reeder.

*Business history:* He has been in our employ for two years as Correspondent in the Sales Department, having come to us from the University of Michigan, of which institution he is a graduate.

*Writer's judgment of person's qualifications:* Mr. Reeder writes very well; his letters have much originality and force. Recently he reorganized our entire correspondence system, and with excellent results. As a keen student of human nature, he knows how to make effective written appeals to different classes of people. He is a courteous, reliable, and very capable young man. His reason for leaving our employ is that he wishes to get into the advertising business.

*Final recommendation:* I heartily and personally recommend him to you as a young man of excellent possibilities.

Yours very truly,

## PROBLEMS IN WRITING LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

1. As Chief Clerk of the Johnson-White Film Corporation, 25 Golden Gate Avenue, San Francisco, California, reply to the letter asked for in Problem 1 on page 141.

The working record of Miss Rice is good in every respect. She is a rapid, accurate, and conscientious stenographer, always endeavoring to do her best. You have a very good opinion of her as a young business woman. She is leaving your firm because her family is moving to Los Angeles, California.

2. Reply to the letter to be written in solving Problem 2 on page 142. Answer definitely such questions as may have been asked in this letter. Make your letter of recommendation brief but complete.
3. Assume that you are the principal of the school mentioned in Problem 3 on page 142 and that Elizabeth Gordon has made an enviable record as student in your school. She was an unusually tactful and neat office worker, when employed in your office for part-time work during her senior year at school.

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Use these and other supposed facts which may occur to you as being essential in a letter of recommendation for the position she wishes to secure.

4. Prepare a personal recommendation for an experienced bookkeeper. Supply all the data needed to make it complete.
5. Recommend one of your classmates, whom you know well personally, to a business friend of yours for an important position. Supply your own data.
6. As Sales Manager of the Smith Wholesale Hardware Company, the firm mentioned in Problem 7 on page 143, write the answer to the letter there asked for.

Your records indicate that Roland Alexander was in your employ for about six months. He is, in your opinion, a capable salesman. He left your employ because of greater opportunities elsewhere. Enlarge upon these data as you may see fit. Write the letter of recommendation.

7. As a former employer of Wm. F. Anderson, you have just received the letter asked for in Problem 10 on page 143. Write a letter in reply, saying that you prefer not to recommend the applicant for good reasons. Do not fill out the blank.
8. Assume that you are the professor in charge of courses in accounting in your school, and that one of your best students, who is about to be graduated, has asked you for a general letter of recommendation, which he intends to use when applying to accounting firms for a position. Prepare the letter.
9. Your elevator man asks you for an open letter of recommendation. He has served you cheerfully and faithfully for three years. He is leaving your employ to be with and care for his aged mother in a distant city. Being a Norwegian by birth, he is devoting most of his spare time to the study of the English language, and other subjects, the mastery of which will in time enable him to occupy a better position.

Write the letter making use of any of these supposed facts.

10. The Madson & Pierce Company, Rockford, Illinois, has asked you, the Superintendent of the La Salle, Illinois, Electric Company, for information concerning Walter Shepherd, who was in your employ as head electrician for a period of four years. His record indicates that he is a capable man with a good education and a good deal of practical experience. He is a faithful worker, and knows how to get the maximum amount of work with the least effort out of those put under his charge. He is a man who likes to be given responsibility. His personal habits are good, his character is far above the average. He left your employ in search of better opportunities.

Using this information, prepare a letter recommending your former employee to the Madson & Pierce Company.

4. *Adapted.* Careful adjustment to the reader's point of view, his character, and that of his business is the prime factor here. A keen interest should be shown in the employer's problems. The pronoun "you" should be pleasantly conspicuous.

5. *Specific.* All statements of fact should be made specifically. Statements of opinion should be made guardedly, or, better, not at all.

6. *Straightforward.* The tone of the application should be unaffected and not be "made to order." Rather its simplicity and directness should reveal the writer's substantial character.

7. *Convincing.* All statements appearing in the letter should be so arranged and worded as to convince the reader of the earnest desire of the applicant to make good, if employed. Above all else, they should be positive.

8. *Forceful.* The final test: The letter as a whole should make a vivid impression. It should stand out as the application of a person not over-confident, but rather of one reasonably confident of being able "to deliver the goods" if given an opportunity to do so.

### *Necessary Preliminary Steps*

The actual writing of an application should always be preceded by a painstaking analysis of the specific demands likely to be made by the prospective employer of the writer, and of the general and particular requirements of the position to be secured. This survey of the contemplated working field can well be made in the case of all applications except probably those that constitute replies to "blind" advertisements.

In all cases where the applicant has definite, personal knowledge of a vacancy, he should obtain as detailed data as possible relative to the character of the man to whom he is to apply, the requirements of the position, and the nature of the business. If possible, he should try to find out the name of the person who has the final "yes" or "no" in his case. Information thus gathered will help the applicant to determine just what type of person the employer needs and wants, and to write a more carefully suited, intelligent, and personal letter. In it the reader will find facts sufficient to enable him to judge at once the writer's fitness for the position, and thus the way for a personal interview may have been paved.

A complete application letter may be constructed on this plan:

### *Key Thoughts of Paragraphs*

1. *You want a certain position:* Make your reader at once acquainted with the fact that you are applying for a certain position in his business.

Let him know where you got this information. Make your opening sentence brief, interesting, and definite.

2. *You are fitted for it, by (a) Your experience:* Give a résumé of your business or professional experience. Emphasize the facts likely to be of greatest importance to the employer. Indicate specifically the kind of work you have done, how long you have done it, and what you have accomplished. Confine yourself to statements of fact. Strive to make these attractive and convincing to the reader. Always remember you are "selling yourself."

(b) *Your education:* Give a résumé of your education. Name the schools of which you are a graduate. Where desirable, indicate that your schooling has fitted you to do certain work especially well. Lay stress upon that part of your school work which is likely to be of greatest value to your reader.

3. *You want the position for a definite reason:* Prospective employers always want to be assured that the applicant has a good reason for wanting employment. This information should be given here briefly and unhesitatingly.

4. *You tell your reader something about yourself:* Give him data relative to your age, nationality, habits, state of health, and tell him whether you are single or married.

5. *You name those who know you and your work well:* Give the names, positions, and addresses of three or four persons who can speak with authority of your character and of the work you have done in former positions. Always give telephone addresses of local references.

6. *You express confidence in your ability to make good and ask for a personal interview:* Summarize your main selling points in a forceful, convincing manner. Be positive. Make it easy for your reader to grant you a personal interview by giving him your telephone number or by enclosing a stamped, addressed envelope. State the exact time when you can be present for interview.

*Note:* It is best not to mention the amount of salary you desire unless this information has been asked for. An arbitrary statement of the amount of compensation wanted may spoil your chances of getting an interview and so a good position. Leave the entire question of salary for the interview when you are face to face with your prospective employer.

information given in the advertisement itself. Make your letter correct in form and attractive in appearance. Use white, letter-sized paper of good quality with envelopes to match. Ruled paper or social stationery should not be employed.

Avoid being eccentric in your endeavor to be original. A young man made application for an important position advertised in a newspaper on a postal card. Needless to say, his message received no favorable consideration. Typewrite your letter to make it appear businesslike. See to it that your machine has fresh, clear-cut type. Leave wide, even margins.

Make certain that all the data asked for in the advertisement are given in your reply. Arrange items regarding experience, training, and education concisely, and in the order of their importance to your reader, or, as circumstances demand, in the order in which they have been asked for in the advertisement. Leave the question of remuneration for the personal interview, unless you have been asked to state the amount of salary desired.

Write replies to "blind" advertisements in accordance with the outline given for the preparation of complete application letters. However, it may be advisable to let the information which your letter gives be of a somewhat more general nature and more condensed in form. Note carefully the illustration below.

### THE ADVERTISEMENT

BOOKKEEPER.—Thoroughly competent man, to take entire charge of books of wholesale establishment and to assist in the handling of credits. Make application in writing, stating your qualifications and experience to Box 5719, Examiner.

### THE REPLY

Box 5719,  
Examiner,  
San Francisco,  
California.

Gentlemen:

Your advertisement in this morning's Examiner indicates that you require the services of a man who is not only fast, accurate, and absolutely reliable in his bookkeeping work, but of one who has had also broad experience, and who enjoys responsi-



bility. Please consider me an applicant for the position.

These are my qualifications:

*Experience:*

Three years assistant bookkeeper in general office of manufacturing concern doing both a retail and a wholesale business.

Four years as head bookkeeper of large wholesale business; in complete charge of books and also of credits and collections.

At present employed as traveling auditor by a large wholesale establishment to examine the books of its various branch houses.

*Education:*

Graduate of School of Commerce of Northwestern University. Specialized in Accounting.

*Reasons for change:*

Desirous of securing a permanent position that will not necessitate my having to be away from home frequently, but that will allow me to enjoy the company of my family and the comforts of my home in this city.

*References:*

I shall be glad to furnish the names of my former employers just as soon as I receive a reply from you.

*Personal data:*

Age thirty-seven, married. American, in good health and of good habits.

I feel confident of my ability to meet your requirements, especially since I have had the kind of experience that should enable me to render you satisfactory service. If you will please telephone my home, Western 1048, and leave a message there for me, I shall be glad to come for a personal interview at your convenience.

Very truly yours,

tunity to prove his worth, later transferring him to a permanent assignment.

The success of the unsolicited application, which should be a selling letter from first to last, depends on the care with which the mailing list is compiled, the effort made to adjust the message to the needs of a particular person or firm, and the skill with which the entire letter is written.

Ordinarily, a mailing list of from five to a dozen names suffices. Before placing a firm's name on his list, the job-seeker should be reasonably certain of its probable need for his services. He should scrutinize the character, business policies, and traditions of the firm, in particular the methods it uses in the department in which he hopes to be employed, and the working condition in the establishment as a whole. If at all possible, he should ascertain the name and general character of the manager of the department concerned—the *one* person who would in all probability pass final judgment on his application—with a view to suiting his letter in form, language, and tone to him. Moreover, the applicant should have a good reason for placing the name of a given firm on his mailing list aside from the fact that it is well-established, apparently successful, and that it pays its employees well. This good reason should be a definite need which, in his opinion, the firm has for a person with his particular training and experience. For, unless his letter emphasizes this specific need, it will most likely fail.

As vital as the selection of a promising list of prospective employers is the intelligent adaptation of the message to the reader. It is in this very essential quality that most application letters are woefully deficient. Queries such as "Is the firm old and conservative, or young and up-to-date?", "Is the manager of the department I wish to join, a college-trained man or not?", "How old is he?", "Specifically, how do the business methods of this firm differ from those of its most important competitors?", "What is the outstanding qualification which I have that would most likely appeal to this man or to this firm?", "What need has this firm in particular for my services now?" will readily suggest themselves to the alert applicant. He will be able to secure their answers by a careful reading of the prospective employer's advertising matter, by visits to his establishment, and by talks with some of his present or former employees. Though the gathering of such information entails much genuine effort and, in certain instances, much ingenuity, it forms the only sound basis for an intelligent and successful marketing of one's services. It is seldom that an application letter showing reader adaptation to a marked degree does not lead to an interview.

propose to establish early next year, calls for the services of a teller who understands thoroughly the black man's temperament and point of view. That I have been successful in dealing with negroes in banking and other financial matters, is shown by the record which I give below.

A man with a high respect for your firm and with an earnest desire to be associated with you permanently seeks to serve you in the capacity of junior accountant.

A broad theoretical background in economics and finance coupled with extensive practical experience writing for newspapers and magazines prompts me to offer you my services as an editorial assistant on your research staff.

My five years' experience in sales promotion has taught me the value of every dollar spent. Whether your advertising is a "necessary expense" or a "sales-producing investment" depends on the way in which it is handled.

Do you have a new line of goods that needs introducing, an old one that should be carried into new territories? Have you new features in some of your standard products that should be brought to public attention? If so, then I can be of definite service to you.

Have you a place in your organization for an energetic young woman who can take dictation at the rate of 150 words a minute and typewrite at the rate of 50 words a minute, who can assume responsibility, and who will gladly prove to your satisfaction that she can do these things if you will give her the opportunity?

qualification

To be effective, the closing paragraph of an unsolicited letter of application should reemphasize briefly the writer's chief qualification for the position, urge prompt action affirmatively, and help the reader to take the action suggested. The exceedingly trite "Thanking you in advance for any consideration you may give this application, I remain," the negative "I hope you will let me hear from you, if you are interested," and the boastful "If after reading this write-up of myself, you are interested, and I don't see how you can help but be, telephone Holly 3055," have, of course, no place in a good application letter.

The following are concluding paragraphs clipped from circular applications which brought interviews.

they are presumed to be sales letters, not autobiographical narratives filled with self-praise.

Sometimes applicants offer inducements to stimulate the reader to immediate and, of course, favorable action. Thus an out-of-town applicant offered to pay his own railway fare if granted an interview. Though competing with sixty-seven other applicants, an experienced copy-writer obtained an interview and a position, because in his letter he had offered his services for two weeks gratis on approval. Commenting on this statement in the letter, the employer remarked: "It proves to me that this man has confidence in his ability to make good. I shall certainly interview him."

## ILLUSTRATIONS OF CIRCULAR LETTERS OF APPLICATION

Dear Sir:

Perhaps you have in your organization a man who does not like to dictate letters, one who is too busy to dictate letters, or one who, though very efficient in his work, is not trained to dictate letters truly representative of your firm. If you have such a man, I could be of much help to him.

In college I majored in English and made a special study of how to write good business letters. The man in question could dispose of his morning mail in ten or fifteen minutes by using me. He could make a few brief notes on the margins of his incoming letters or write a line or two on a piece of scratch paper and attach it to the letter, indicating his desire as to how he wished the matter handled. Around that nucleus I could weave a letter that would represent your firm worthily and make friends for your product. As time went on and I became thoroughly familiar with his policies (much of this information I could obtain from previous correspondence), I could take care of the majority of letters without bothering him. When an occasional letter demanded a strictly personal reply, I could take this in shorthand.

No doubt you will agree that such a procedure would mean that the hours which this man ordinarily spends dictating would be left free for more productive activity.

This, then, is one way in which I could be of service to you. The second is this: I can write sales letters that pull, that are original, interesting, concise, yet have just the right human, friendly touch. Your sales letters sell your goods, leave their recipients indifferent, or else turn them against your product. Good letters do not just happen. They require careful thought, a

knowledge of the rudiments of letter writing, a liking for people, and an understanding of their psychological reactions.

May I have an opportunity to talk this matter over with you? My telephone is Madison 453-X.

Very truly yours,

The letter printed below is an example of a highly successful unsolicited application. However, since it is written in the third person and since its language and general tone are so suggestive of the "independent go-getter," it was sent only to firms known to have aggressive and up-to-date policies. The letter was sent to fifteen business men, twelve of whom granted the writer, who by this means secured the kind of position he wanted, personal interviews.

Dear Sir:

Rarely have you the opportunity to purchase high class business ability and sound judgment of important matters in a man of twenty-eight.

You have now: this is on the Denver market, at a low figure, subject to immediate acceptance.

The writer has just completed a four-year period of service with the Associated Advertising Company in both Des Moines, Iowa, and Omaha, Nebraska, as salesman, and later as Manager of the Sales Promotion Department. His business ability and judgment are the logical results of that experience.

The six previous years he spent with a prominent wholesale grocery house of the Middle West and a merchandise broker of the same territory. Work for the latter consisted of selling specialties to the retail grocery, hardware, and furniture dealers in the Middle West.

This man is unusually able, adaptable, analytical, and thorough. His broad experience has made it possible for him to see the selling features and possibilities, both in merchandise and service, in various lines of business.

His study and experience in handling many diversified phases of business while engaged in advertising have given him an insight into the policies and methods of many successful business houses of the Middle West, and his experience on the road is one of his best assets.

This man has recently come from Iowa to Colorado, where he wishes to make his home permanently.

He is in the best of health, twenty-eight years of age, of American parentage, and married. He can furnish excellent references.

Just now he would appreciate an interview to consider the matter of his fitness.

His name and address are

### *The Application Follow-up*

In most sales campaigns, one letter does not bring the desired results. Similarly, one application letter is usually not enough to turn the tide in the writer's favor. The very fact that most of the job hunters do not even think of following their original applications up with a second, even a third, letter, gives the well-prepared application follow-up letter just that much more attention value. As a rule, business men like their employees to be persistent in their undertakings, so that a letter following the first one within seven to ten days, is very apt to be read with interest and promptness. Just as an experienced salesman holds in reserve one or more of his chief talking points for probable objections, so should the applicant hold back some important part of his training or experience for the follow-up.

If an applicant has been given an interview and has been told that before making a final decision, the employer will talk with other candidates, then the applicant should immediately write a suitable follow-up letter timed, if possible, to arrive on the day of the interview. Since during the meeting, the latter was told of the exact qualifications necessary to fill the position, he should now be able to write a message far better adapted than his first. Such a letter should express appreciation for the interview, reassure the reader of the writer's special fitness for the position, and give further information on points emphasized by the former during the interview. In the case of most routine positions, a one-page letter will serve the purpose. In order to refresh the reader's mind, a copy of the original application should be attached to the follow-up.

### ILLUSTRATION

Dear Sir:

Thank you very much for the opportunity which you afforded me this morning to tell you of my fitness for the position of sales correspondent in your mail-order department.

At that time you told me of your desire to find somebody for the position who could write letters that would reach women, since most of your customers are women. I am pleased, therefore, to

attach two letters addressed to middle-class women which I prepared for one of my former employers. The one brought eight, the other thirteen per cent returns in bona fide orders. I am confident that the three years' experience in this phase of mail-order selling which I gained while in the employ of the Mid-Western Mail-Order House would aid me appreciably in rendering satisfactory service to you.

If you will telephone Mr. John F. Hollman, Westride 685, under whose direct supervision I did the work mentioned above, he will give you further details.

Should you wish references or data in addition to those furnished you already, I shall gladly and promptly comply with your request if you will telephone Gramercy 897-S. As I told you this morning, I am very desirous of joining your staff and of proving my worth as sales correspondent to you.

Yours very truly,

Copy of my original application letter is attached for your convenience.

### PROBLEMS IN ANSWERING WANT ADS

1. From the want ad columns of a newspaper or technical magazine, select a "blind" advertisement for a position which you would like to secure. Write an application in answer to it. Submit ad with your letter.
2. **WANTED—COMPETENT BOOKKEEPER.**—An office man with experience in retail lumber and building material business. A No. 1 young man, capable of taking charge of books, credits and collections. No stenographic work. State experience and make application in own handwriting. Business located in good town in Kentucky. Address "M-98." Southern Lumberman, Memphis, Tenn.
3. **SALES CORRESPONDENT WANTED.**—A St. Louis manufacturer of commercial refrigerators would like to hear from a sales correspondent to act as assistant to the sales manager. Young man with some selling experience in the refrigerating field, who has the facility to write forcful letters, will find this an unusual opportunity to connect himself with one of the oldest, but most progressive, institutions in the Middle West. Refer reply with full details, photograph, etc., to Box RAN 2288, The Telegram, Oklahoma City, Okla.
4. **WANTED.**—President of large city bank wants capable stenographer and secretary. Must be fast, accurate, and thoroughly reliable. College graduate preferred. State experience, training, age, nationality, and salary expected. Address K-930, The Chronicle, Paterson, N. J.
5. **WANTED.**—Woman, experienced in family social work, for assistant secretary. Must be qualified to supervise visitors, organize volunteers, and teach students in Seattle School of Social Work. State age, health, education, experience, and present salary. Send photograph, references, and full information in first letter. Public Welfare Bureau, Seattle, Washington.

6. SEMI-SENIORS AND JUNIORS.—A long-established firm of certified public accountants desires to add to its staff several semi-seniors and juniors, who have had some public experience and who have completed an accredited course in accountancy, and, preferably, in business law; satisfactory academic education and impressive address requisite; exceptional opportunity for young men of mature determination; commensurate compensation. Give chronological account of business and professional history, education, age, nationality, whether married or single. Replies confidential. A. Lee Stevensen & Co., Norfolk, Va.
7. CORRESPONDENCE CRITIC WANTED.—Must know how to write effectively. College graduate, experienced, able to direct others. Excellent opportunity for the right person. State experience, education, age, etc. Let your letter sell your services. The People's Department Store, 89 Worthy St., Burlington, Iowa.

### MISCELLANEOUS PROBLEMS IN WRITING APPLICATIONS

8. Assume that you are about to be graduated from a university school of commerce, where, among numerous other subjects, you studied business English and advertising quite thoroughly. It is your desire to obtain, if possible, a position in some advertising agency as correspondent or copy writer in which you would have an opportunity to work out and submit some of your own ideas. You have had two summers' experience as a book salesman.

You have just been informed of an opening for a correspondent in a prominent, local advertising agency by the employment department of your school. Applicants for this position will be judged strictly by their first letters. These are to give complete data concerning the writer's qualifications. Experience is desirable, but not absolutely necessary. A personal interview will be granted those whose letters merit serious consideration.

Apply for the position. Make your letter an original, strong, man-to-man appeal for the position. Say that you do not want salary so much as an opportunity to prove your worth as a correspondent.

9. As a sophomore in a university school of commerce, you find it suddenly necessary to discontinue your studies in order to earn your own living. You know shorthand and typewriting well, and think it best to obtain a position as stenographer.

Shortly before returning to school, the President of the First National Bank of your home town, whom you know well, said he might have an opening in the bank for you at some future time, and suggested your looking him up on completion of your university course.

You are now asked to write to this man, reminding him of this statement, and suggesting that he employ you *now*. Give a complete statement of your qualifications, reason for leaving school, etc., etc. Tell him you want a stenographic position, and why.



10. Assume that some months ago, the head of your department or school recommended you, a graduate of a commercial school, for a position as correspondent with the Walker & Ports Installment Furniture Company, Indianapolis, Indiana.

You applied for this position by letter at that time, and though this firm was desirous of awarding you the position, it did not do so because your application contained a number of errors in spelling. In other respects it was good. In writing you the firm suggested your applying two months later, at which time you were to give satisfactory evidence of having improved your knowledge of spelling. The main requirements of the position are that the applicant must know how to keep books and how to write effective sales and collection letters. His application letter, moreover, was to state training, experience, if any, age, nationality, and references.

It is now two months since you first applied for the position. Write the second letter.

11. You are a salesman for the Service Automobile Company, your city, which firm has just sold its entire business, necessitating your securing another position. Your record indicates that you are thirty-two years old, married, American of Swedish parentage, of impressive address and winning personality, that you have been employed as salesman by the American Automobile Company, your city, for a period of three years, and by the Service Automobile Company, in the same capacity, for a period of two years. You have been topping the sales force of the latter firm so far as total annual sales for the last year are concerned.

Use these and any other assumptions, which may occur to you as being helpful, in the preparation of an unsolicited application to be sent to five firms selling high-grade automobiles in your city or neighborhood. Be very careful of the choice of these firms and adapt your letter to their particular needs and problems, which it will be advisable for you to ascertain and analyze before attempting to write the letter. Remember, you are writing an *unsolicited* application which must win attention, secure a complete reading, and bring you a personal interview. State the amount of compensation you have been receiving, but leave discussion of the amount of salary you wish for the personal interview.

12. Write a circular application for a position for which you think you are qualified.
13. You are just now finishing a course in college, and wish to obtain a position as high school teacher in your home town upon graduation.

Prepare an unsolicited application to be sent to the superintendent of your home town high school, informing him of your desire, and asking him to consider you for a position as teacher of certain subjects for the coming school year.

Enclose a photograph and a return envelope. Ask for an application blank. Let your letter sell your services.

14. Assume that you were given an interview in response to the letter asked for in solution of Problem 4, page 160. Your interviewer told you that you made a favorable impression on him, but that before coming to a final decision he wanted to meet other candidates for the position. He said that a large number of the bank's customers were German-Americans and that a knowledge of German would be very desirable. You have had but two years' training in German at college and can neither speak nor understand this language.

Assume that the position for which you applied offers you good opportunities for advancement. You want it more than you did before the interview. Write a letter to follow up the interview. Answer the objection that might arise concerning your not knowing German.

15. You answered the advertisement given in Problem 3 on page 160 a week ago, but have received no reply. Since you want very much to secure this particular position, write a suitable follow-up letter.

Criticize, then rewrite the following parts of application letters:

16. Permit me to intrude on your valuable time to make application for a position with your organization.
17. I don't want to take too much of your time reading a long letter from an applicant. May I only offer myself for any temporary office work you may have during the summer vacation? —
18. After one year of service as assistant manager of the El Cortez Hotel, I have given up this position, because it offers no advancement, and am now looking for some different employment.
19. I have the ability to do efficient work and your business will thrive if you employ me for this position.
20. I wish very much to get this position with your firm to work out some of my ideas on advertising.
21. I hope to hear from you, should you consider this application.
22. May I have a personal interview re. your ad in to-day's "Times"?
23. Personal interviews being much more satisfactory than writing, trust I may hear from you. —
24. In conclusion I might say that I am a master of accounts, a good correspondent, a capable executive, and have unlimited capacity for business details. Soliciting a personal interview, I am. —
25. The qualifications I have are too versatile to explain in any form-application letter such as this, involving sales, engineering, and deep and broad experience, and therefore your granting me an interview at your earliest convenience will be highly respected and deeply appreciated.
26. I trust you will pardon the extreme liberty I am taking in addressing you personally, but having been advised of the notable part which you

play in the civic and commercial life of this great city, I thought that perhaps you might not take it amiss in my so doing, and I trust that I may attract more than passing interest in your mind, and that I may have the honor of your consideration and reply.

27. Do not read this letter till you can spend at least thirty minutes on it. This letter is to be considered as a letter of application.
28. Through a series of unforeseen and unfortunate circumstances have been reduced until I am living in a one-time garage. Sickness caused most of my trouble.
29. I have just read with much interest the article in the "National Retail Clothier" of the opening of your new store in Pasadena and congratulate you. It is a thing of beauty and has made me want to be a member of your firm.
30. Although studying various commercial subjects in college, my attention was mainly directed toward advertising and business correspondence.
31. In the summer of last year, the direct-sellers company employed me as an experienced canvasser in charge of the West Davenport district.
32. At an interview next Tuesday morning at ten o'clock I can tell you more of myself and we can become much better acquainted.
33. I was employed as salesman by the Frank Pub. Co. at which I succeeded sufficiently to merit advancement.
34. If you will give me a trial at this job and I don't learn the work assigned to me faster than anyone has ever done, you will not owe me a cent of pay for my work.
35. You need but give me a chance to prove my worth as an asset to your company.
36. I have back of me a high school education majoring in English.
37. When you make an investment in an employee, it is with the thought that she will pay you a profit. Something about her leads you to expect that she will contribute to the further success of your firm.
38. Salary doesn't interest me to the value of a "tinker's dam"; but your quest for "original ideas" takes me by storm, because these have been my working capital all my life and I'm now working on one with which I hope to climax a successful career in the advertising field.
39. That's all I'm going to tell you at present writing; because I don't know you and you don't know me; and to "cast bread upon the waters" is no part of my method in seeking revenue to cover domicile and sustenance.
40. Your ad looks good to me so far, but "you never can tell!" I'll take a chance on a conference if you will.

## CHAPTER X

### COMPLAINTS AND ADJUSTMENTS

#### *Present Practices*

Some years ago complainants were regarded as "knockers" and cranks, to be silenced, certainly not to be encouraged and helped. They were generally ignored, sometimes answered perfunctorily, sometimes with acrimony. It was an era of let-the-buyer-beware-and-the-customer-complain—of shortsightedness and stupidity. To-day it is generally understood that business can grow only by keeping in intimate touch with the customer. Its doors are wide open to complainants since frequently they make valuable suggestions for the practical improvement of goods or service—suggestions which in notable cases have transformed the policies and products of many an enterprise. Modern literature on the subject abounds in inspiring examples of businesses built and rebuilt on the basis of ideas hidden in letters penned thoughtfully by troubled patrons.

It was but recently that the president of a prominent telephone company sent written invitations to the executives of more than one hundred of its chief customers for a friendly get-together at which the latter might speak their minds freely concerning the quality of telephone service they were receiving and perhaps offer suggestions for its betterment. This shrewd chief executive opines that to endure, a business must constantly sense the consumers' attitude toward its goods or its service, must afford them ample opportunity to speak or write to its representatives about the firm and its product. To him complaints have assumed sufficient importance to become matters for executive action. In order to keep the ear of management attuned to consumer wants, it is desirable to bring the complaint to the attention of someone with authority to change policy or product—to adjust it effectively.

If it is true that the best advertisement of any business is a satisfied customer, then it follows that a dissatisfied customer is the worst living advertisement of a business. By spreading the alarm, so to say, among his associates and friends the dissatisfied one can do a business so much harm that no amount of good-will advertising can entirely erase the pernicious effects. Nor does a business man have to be a diviner to know that for

every customer who takes the trouble to complain, a dozen or so will keep still but sample competitive goods and service. The history of American business furnishes many examples of firms that failed because in their mad effort to lure trade away from competitors they neglected their old customers.

Assuredly, the first duty of any business is to the customers it has already won. Though they may not always be in the right, their complaints should challenge the seller to improve his wares, to mend his ways of offering them. Such is the up-to-date view of complaints and adjustments. To the extent to which a man in business maintains and develops it, he is likely to succeed. And the best advice which may be offered any adjustment correspondent is *always* to settle just complaints to the entire satisfaction of the customer; if possible, with little expense to the firm, but satisfactorily.

The following correspondence will serve to show, at least in part, how a wide-awake service corporation adjusts complaints:

### *The Complaint*

Gentlemen:

For some time I have been wanting to write this letter to you, but have always put it off. This morning, however, your bus service exasperated me.

I take the #52 Addison Street Limited on New England Avenue and Addison Street every morning. This morning I just missed a bus at 7:22 a.m., and then waited until 7:32 for the next one, exactly ten minutes. When it finally came along, there were two of them—one right behind the other. That is just an example of the way your bus schedules are run. Two or three buses in a row, and then one has to wait, I don't know how long. There were three or four buses standing out at Harlem Avenue, so that there was no excuse for the driver to start late or to have two buses start at one time.

Furthermore, the driver was so slow I believe he thought he had a sight-seeing bus out for a pleasure ride. The second bus passed us up, and I believe it was down in the loop by the time we reached Addison and Sheridan Streets, for it was soon lost out of sight.

My destination is Walton Place and Michigan Boulevard. I was two minutes late this morning, arriving at 8:32, which means that I lose a half-day. I am confident that one hour should be sufficient time to allow for me to get to my place of business on time, but somehow it is not, and I feel it is owing to the poor service you give us.

A similar situation occurs in the evening. I finish my work at 5 o'clock. However, I cannot get a bus till about 5:20 or 5:25, which gets me home approximately at 6:20. Oh, yes, there are one or two buses coming by Walton and Michigan between 5:00 and 5:15, but not for us. Some drivers won't stop, and others have a load and cannot pick up any more passengers. Perhaps if you marked all the Addison coaches "Limited," it would eliminate local riders and give us Addisonites a chance to get home within a reasonable time, or otherwise start a coach at the bridge about 5 o'clock.

The statement given you above is not exaggerated—it is a true schedule of your Addison Street Bus Line.

What can you do to give better bus service?

Yours very truly,

### *The Adjustment*

Dear Madam:

We were extremely sorry to read in your recent letter about the difficulty you experienced when using our Route #52 service.

The matter was immediately taken up with our North Division Superintendent, Mr. Howe, who, I understand, called and personally discussed it with you. In addition, I had a check taken of customers aboard Route #52 coaches, at New England and Addison Streets, eastbound, yesterday forenoon, with the following results:

Run No.	Coach No.	Time	Customers Aboard
160	1942	7:11 a.m.	20
162	2101	7:16	24
164	1946	7:21	8
166	2120	7:26	26
168	1947	7:31	23
170	1954	7:36	16
172	2122	7:42	17
173	2110	7:46	6
174	1956	7:49	2
175	2114	7:53	9
176	1939	8:00	10
177	2106	8:05	16
178	2121	8:11	11
150	1959	8:19	5
151	2103	8:27	16
152	2111	8:35	6
153	2107	8:43	2
154	1945	8:51	2
155	1957	8:59	5
156	1953	9:07	8

As mentioned by Mr. Howe, special efforts are being made to have operators maintain schedules as closely as traffic conditions will permit. We trust that you will reach your place of work and your home quickly and promptly from now on.

Thank you for giving us this opportunity to investigate and to improve our service.

Yours very truly,

*The Follow-up*

Dear Madam:

Have you noticed any improvement in the matter of coaches running on time on Route #52?

Since the receipt of your letter, we have been urging our operators to maintain the schedule as promptly as traffic conditions will permit, by means of blackboard notices, renewed instructions to our men, and reminders by supervisors.

We have a keen desire to conduct our service to the comfort and convenience of you and other patrons; and when attention is called to any feature of our service not entirely satisfactory, we take immediate steps to correct it.

We shall be grateful to you for writing us relative to your recent experience with our coach service on Route #52. Enclosed is a stamped, addressed envelope for your reply.

Yours very truly,

*The Reply*

Gentlemen:

First of all, I want to thank you for the courteous manner in which you have followed up my complaint in regard to the #52 Addison Street Bus Service. It makes me feel that your company endeavors to straighten out all complaints and to give the public more efficient transportation service.

For the past month I have found a decided improvement in the Addison Street Bus Service. Coaches have been running every four or five minutes apart and have been making good time.

I take this opportunity to express my appreciation of this improved service, and also to compliment you especially on the way in which you have routed all Limited Coaches. The fact that these coaches are permitted to use the golf drive in the park avoids much traffic delay and saves from

five to eight minutes' time. I am confident that this move on your part has aided in securing many additional boosters for your service.

Very truly yours,

That some firms will resort to extreme, even stuntlike adjustment practices to show their willingness to remove customers' difficulties, is evidenced by the fact that some metropolitan department stores used to employ so-called "O.F.M.'s." They were the Official Fired Men who were discharged ten or more times a day. To quote a newspaper story:

Their discharge is merely a sop to the feelings of ruffled customers. A just complaint is made. The manager is grieved. He sends for a man who supposedly is responsible for the error. The latter enters, wearing a hangdog look. The manager thunders in seeming wrath. The O.F.M. tries to build up a justification, but his every excuse is swept away and he stands the picture of despair. In the end he is told that the firm can use him no longer.

He is given a slip of paper and told to see the cashier for what salary is coming to him. He slouches out, returns to his desk, lights a cigarette, and awaits the next dismissal. Many times the customer feels that the matter has gone too far. He does not want to see a man lose his job. He pleads for his reinstatement, and if he pleads long enough, the O.F.M. will be recalled and told that it is due only to the customer's magnanimity that he will be able to continue his post. He grasps the customer's hand in gratitude, wipes away the suspicion of a tear, and goes back to his desk.

Of course, after the O.F.M. is discharged, the department store makes a thorough investigation of the complaint and seeks in every way to correct it; but in a public rebuke and dismissal the store has impressed the customer as it might have in no other way. One customer is said to have made three complaints and in each case the same employee was discharged. He became suspicious and wrote a letter, and that is how the story leaked out.

### *Making Claims*

The human factor which must necessarily enter into every business transaction makes for misunderstandings, annoyances, disappointments that result from oversights and omissions and a multitude of other causes. It should be the aim of letters making claims to get these errors rectified as quickly and satisfactorily as possible and to provide a safeguard against their recurrence. A brief, courteous, and definite letter giving the facts leading up to the dissatisfaction, and either requesting an explanation or asking for an adjustment will accomplish this best. Such a letter should be written just as soon as the trouble has occurred or is discovered.

First, and most important of all, make certain that you have good cause for complaint. Then state your claim calmly, tactfully, and positively. Do not let your feeling of irritation or anger dominate the tone of



your letter. Abusive and sarcastic language produces only ill feeling, thus perhaps delaying a prompt settlement of the claim. Such language has neither value nor justification in business letters.

Letters in which claims are made may be written according to the following plan:

1. State claim, and facts concerning it, briefly and positively. (If case is particularly bad, point out ill effects of trouble on you or your business.)
2. Ask for immediate explanation and prompt action courteously but firmly.
3. Express hope that your claim will be promptly investigated and acted upon. (If case is very bad, threaten to withdraw your patronage if service does not improve.)

### ILLUSTRATION

(A negative and particularly bad claim)

The Optimo Pen Mfg. Co.,  
Waterloo, Iowa.

Gentlemen:

In your letter of May 2th you say it will cost \$2.07 to repair my fountain pen. In reply shall say, I can take two dollars and twenty-five cents and buy a better pen than this ever was, a better pen than a set of CROOKS like you could or ever have made. Someone told me you were responsible people, but since this pen turned out to be of no account whatever and I have received your letter and statement in regard to repairing it, I have become convinced that you are liars and grafters.

Two cents carried this pen to Waterloo and two cents will bring it back, if you will give it a start: enclosed find stamp for that purpose. Send it by return mail. I want to get it and throw it away to keep you from beating some other man with it. I am not in the habit of being "pulled" for any kind of insurance as you intend to charge me.

Please stick this up under the Main Guy's nose,

Yours,

(The same claim stated courteously)

Gentlemen:

*State claim  
briefly  
and posi-  
tively:*

I was surprised to learn from your letter of May 2 that it would cost \$2.07 to repair the fountain pen which I recently sent you. This charge seems very high, especially when you consider the fact that I can buy a brand-new pen for only \$2.50.

*Ask for adjustment courteously but firmly:* In view of the high cost of repair and of the fact that this pen has given me very poor service, I should much prefer getting a new fountain pen. Please let me know the value of the various parts I sent you, or, in other words, the amount I would have to pay to get a new pen.

*Urge prompt reply:* I shall appreciate your giving me this information at once as I am desirous of getting a new fountain pen just as quickly as possible.

Very truly yours,

### *Adjusting Claims*

The adjustment and settlement of a claim is considered rightly one of the most important problems in business correspondence, because it affords an exceptionally favorable opportunity so to manage and serve a customer who has had cause for dissatisfaction as not only to keep him, but also to make him a permanent and willing advertiser of the firm. To attain these ends it is necessary first of all to give the complainant immediate attention. Unless the claim can be adjusted directly after it has been received, the customer should be given immediate and positive assurance that definite action is being taken to right his wrong.

No matter who is at fault, and no matter how abusive the language or how distressing the spirit it shows, he who answers the complaint should do so courteously, definitely, and apparently with cheerfulness. Negative suggestion, excuses, and apologies are of no value whatever in adjusting claims. Positive suggestion, admissions of error, and sincere statements of regret are of immense value. Do not trouble your customer with statements of what you cannot do, but pacify and please him with statements of what you can and will do. Then *do* the things you promised to do. Get in tune with your complainant. Take him seriously. Let him know that you appreciate the feelings expressed in his letter. Sympathize with him.

Good letters of adjustment are characterized first by a brief statement of who is at fault. If it happens to be the firm, then this fact is admitted with an expression of regret frankly but not apologetically. On the other hand, if investigation proves conclusively that the error is the customer's, then he is given a careful and tactful explanation of it. Of course, such a statement is made not to antagonize and so to lose the customer, but to appeal to his sense of justice and fair play, and thus to convince him, if possible, and to keep him. The tone of an adjustment letter should never be argumentative and irritating, but always explanatory and soothing.

Next in importance is a definite statement of the action which the firm is taking toward adjusting the claim. In other words, the customer

is told when and how his claim will be settled. Every claim should be so adjusted as to satisfy the customer completely. This is necessary to re-establish the customer's confidence in the firm, to gain his good will—to keep him on the list of satisfied customers.

Unless the reasons for the action taken by the writer are at once apparent to the reader, they should be made known to him in a way to show clearly the attitude and policy of the firm toward complaints in general. Such a statement will help the reader to understand better the action taken by the firm, and will enable him to judge properly its policies of adjustment and its general attitude toward its customers. It is also advisable to inform the customer of any steps that are being taken to guard against the recurrence of complaints and thus to assure him of better service in the future. However, in no case should impossible promises to the effect that "this will never happen again," etc., be made.

In analysis, the adjustment letter is a sales letter. Its purpose is to sell again the firm, its policies, service, and goods to a dissatisfied customer who, if not now satisfied, is likely to do business with a competitor. Since it costs less to retain an old customer on the books than to get a new one, and since doing business with old, well-known customers is generally more satisfactory than doing business with new customers, it follows that the matter of adjusting claims is one of prime importance, and one that should be handled with the utmost care, tact, and business judgment. Adjust a complaint by mail in the same cheerful and calm manner in which you would adjust a complaint in person. It is not the letter itself that counts so much as it is the spirit behind that letter.

In adjusting claims the following outline of principles may be used:

1. Sympathize with customer:
  - (a) By thanking him for bringing dissatisfaction to your attention, or
  - (b) By expressing regret over occurrence of trouble or misunderstanding.
2. Appeal to his sense of fair play by offering a brief explanation of the cause of dissatisfaction and prepare him for the action you are going to take (as stated in the following paragraph).
3. Satisfy customer by settling claim gladly and explicitly.
4. Reassure him by emphasizing your intention to prevent recurrence of such dissatisfaction, and your ability to serve his interests now and in the future.

The following letter \* illustrates the application of these principles:

\* Sent in reply to complaint on p. 170, this letter brought a favorable answer.

Dear Sir:

The feelings expressed in your letter of May 10 are understood when we remember your request to repair your pen at a reasonable cost to you.

At first glance it does not seem reasonable to charge \$2.07 for repairing a pen when a brand-new Optimo Self Filler Pen can be purchased at a price as low as \$2.50. From a brief analysis of the present costs of the manufacture of gold pens you will realize that the gold pen itself is an expensive thing to make. All our gold pens are 14-K gold, are tipped with native hard Iridium points, which material costs us nearly \$260 an ounce, and there are 108 separate and distinct hand operations in the making of Optimo gold pens.

We could not comply with your request and use some other, cheaper form of pen, because the Optimo gold pen is the only one which will resist the action of the acids in ink. This combined with the Iridium point, which will wear a lifetime, makes the first cost of the pen of little importance. You, of course, desire a pen that will give you continuous and satisfactory service day in and day out. The cost of making repairs is really small as compared with the time and trouble it takes to tinker with various pens and put them in satisfactory condition. A pen which is not entirely satisfactory to the user is a nuisance, yet nothing is more useful and gives more real pleasure than an Optimo Self Filler Fountain Pen which exactly fits the user's requirements.

That is why we want you to have a real pen. There is an Optimo Fountain Pen made for you, and we are going to arrange it so that you can have a brand-new model at a reasonable cost. The KN pen, which is one of our best sellers, will cost you \$2.62. We will guarantee delivery to your hands. The various parts of the fountain pen which you sent in are valued at \$1.25. We will give you credit for this amount to apply on the purchase price of the KN pen with a fine point, pocket clip, all complete, and backed up by the OPTIMO guarantee. The new pen placed in your hands will then cost you only \$1.37.

This will give you a brand-new model of pen which we know you will appreciate having in your possession. Moreover, its cost is less than the actual expense of making repairs to the old pen which you sent in. We can pack it and ship it to you on the same day that we receive a favorable reply from you. Please send express money-order or stamps. What is your decision?

Yours very truly,

1. *When the seller is to blame.* Here the claim may concern the kind, amount, quality, or condition of the service rendered, or of the goods shipped, or the time of shipment, or numerous other matters.

When an investigation of the claim discloses the seller to be at fault, it is best to write the customer immediately, briefly stating the conditions responsible for the error and offering to satisfy him directly and completely. A frank admission of the error and an emphatic statement assuring the reader that precautions have been taken to prevent so far as possible its recurrence distinguish the contents of this adjustment letter from that of the general adjustment letter. However, the outline for answers to claims for which the seller is to blame is the same as that given above.

### ILLUSTRATION

Dear Sir:

*Thank  
reader for  
writing:*

Thank you very much for writing us, as you did in your letter of May 20, concerning the teaspoons which you sent us about a month ago for exchange.

*Explain  
cause of  
dissatis-  
faction:*

Surely, there is no excuse whatever for our keeping four teaspoons for one month for the simple matter of changing the finish. We are frank in confessing that a mistake in our repair department is responsible for this delay, and that we have accordingly taken this department to task. You can readily appreciate, however, that in a factory as large as ours, where we depend upon routine and factory workers, a mistake is sure to creep in once in a while.

*Settle  
claim  
definitely:*

We are sending you today four teaspoons, French finish, no charge, to replace the four teaspoons, bright finish, which you sent us.

*Reassure  
customer:*

We are mighty sorry that this delay occurred. You may be sure that we shall make every effort to see that it does not occur again.

Very truly yours,

2. *When the carrier is to blame.* Sometimes the fault is neither that of the firm nor that of the customer, but that of the transportation company. It has to do either with delay or with damage of goods in transit or delivery.

If the shipment of goods has been delayed, the adjustment letter should say specifically what the buyer is to do to hasten delivery. As soon as the seller has traced the shipment, he should notify the customer of its location and probable arrival. In exceptional cases where the delay of the goods

has been so serious as to lessen their selling value to the customer, it may become necessary to offer the latter a special discount or slight price reduction to accept the goods.

If the goods have been severely damaged in transit, the alert business firm will as a rule settle with the customer immediately either by refunding the purchase price or by duplicating the order. It will then seek reimbursement from the transportation company. Where the damage to goods has been slight, the customer is furnished with instructions to repair it and some price reduction is usually made to induce him to keep the goods.

Taken all in all, even though the carrier is responsible for the complaint, it is best for the seller to retain the good-will of his customer by settling his claim immediately and seeking redress from the carrier later.

## ILLUSTRATION

Dear Sir:

*Sympathize  
with cus-  
tomer:*

We are very sorry to learn from your letter of October 25, that the mirror which you recently purchased for a wedding present arrived in damaged condition.

*Offer brief  
explanation  
of cause  
of trouble:*

Since you told us of the importance of this purchase when in our store, we instructed our shipping department to pack the mirror with extraordinary care so that it would be sure to reach you in perfect condition. Our receipt from the express company shows that it received the package in first-class condition. It is therefore clear that the mirror was damaged in transit, and that the fault lies with the express company, which assumed full responsibility for the shipment when it was turned over to them.

*Satisfy cus-  
tomer by  
settling his  
claim  
definitely:*

However, because we fully realize the embarrassing situation you are placed in by this mishap and because it is our aim to satisfy our customers always, we are to-day expressing another mirror of the same kind to you, which, we hope, will reach you not only in perfect condition, but also in time for the wedding. Please leave the damaged mirror in the hands of the express company with which we shall take the matter up direct.

*Reassure  
customer:*

We are glad to be able to render this slight service to you. As you know, our policy is "satisfaction guaranteed." You will greatly help us in maintaining it by writing us promptly whenever our goods or service has failed to come up to your expectations.

Very truly yours,

3. *When the customer is to blame.* The fault may be due to a mistake in the order, to lack of care, to ignorance of the use of the goods or to numerous other causes.

When it is definitely established that the customer is to blame, the one who settles the claim is given a good opportunity to impress upon the reader the fact that his firm has above all else the interests of its customers at heart, whom it aims to give 100 per cent service and perfect satisfaction. It is wise to secure the reader's full confidence at once, and in the very beginning of the letter, by agreeing and sympathizing with him. Then should follow a brief, businesslike explanation of the trouble. This is made in a manner so impersonal, careful and tactful that the reader will accept it in the same spirit of downright fairmindedness in which the writer first offered the explanation.

The fact should be emphasized that the firm is willing to settle the claim despite the customer's responsibility, but with caution, so that, though the latter may be made aware that he has been extended a business favor, he will not feel humiliated or piqued.

Letters of this kind must be genial and tactful. They should create an atmosphere of sincere, mutual understanding designed to make stronger and more enduring the bonds of good-will existing between buyer and seller. In short, the customer should be satisfied to a point where he will consider it a privilege actually to "boost" the firm, its policies, its goods, and its service.

## ILLUSTRATION

Dear Sir:

*Thank customer for writing you:*

We are glad to get your letter of May 28, which we have held unanswered, awaiting the arrival of the thermostat, which we received to-day.

*Explain the cause of dissatisfaction:*

A thorough inspection of the thermostat shows that the fault is not that of the valve, but is due to the kind of gas which has been used. This is clearly proved by the fact that on the leverage as well as on the valve set and the top of the valve is an accumulation or deposit that is caused by the use of impure gas.

*Satisfy customer by settling his claim:*

In view of the fact that the cost of repairing this valve would equal the cost of a new one, it would be useless to do so. However, since you are a new customer, and since you have used the thermostat only a short time, we have decided to send you a new valve free of charge. It is of the latest type and fully guaranteed to work perfectly, provided, of course, that pure gas is used. We are

also returning the old valve to you and would ask that you inspect it personally.

*Reassure him by emphasizing your desire to serve:* It is our desire to co-operate with our customers by giving them the best possible service always. That is why we are sending you a brand-new valve free of charge, though we must frankly admit we are making an exception in your case for the reasons stated above. But above everything else we want to see you completely satisfied.

*Close naturally:* Please feel free to write us at any time concerning our goods or our service.

Very truly yours,

4. *When the fault is not ascertained.* If the nature of the claim is such as to necessitate a more or less complicated and lengthy investigation before adjustment can be made, then the customer should be notified promptly of this fact. As soon as the fault has been ascertained and the investigation completed, a second letter should be sent the complainant, giving him the facts of the case and settling the claim accordingly.

### ILLUSTRATION

Dear Sir:

Thank you very much for your letter of June 4, received this morning.

We are investigating this matter very carefully, and as soon as we have gathered all the facts of the case, which will take some little time, we will write you again.

Very truly yours,

Many routine claims, and others involving small amounts of money, are frequently made right even though the fault has not been determined:

Dear Madam:

We are very sorry to note from your letter of April 30, that you did not receive the Woman's Friend at your new address.

Our records show that it was mailed to you on schedule time. However, we are sending you a duplicate copy to-day. If you should happen to change your address again, won't you please give us at least four weeks' notice? Otherwise, we cannot be responsible for magazines lost through change of address.



By the way, our new Magazine, The Modern Woman, is just out. Did you get your free sample copy? If not, just write your name on the enclosed card and drop it in the mail box now before this matter slips your mind.

Sincerely,

### *Refusing Claims When the Customer Is to Blame*

Here tact and diplomacy are the essential qualities of the adjustment letter. To be sure, the customer's claim is to be refused. This should be done in a manner so straightforward, fair and square that the complainant cannot fail to realize the writer's sincerity, his endeavor to treat him justly and in man-to-man fashion. As is true of all letters of adjustment, the key thought here, too, is "Satisfy the customer and keep him." Take the reader's point of view always. Explain your side of the question briefly but clearly by giving all the essential facts. Then ask your customer to consider your explanation carefully and to write you his opinion of the matter. This will show him that you are willing to do the right thing by him.

The following letter, in which the third person is wisely used, will illustrate:

Dear Madam:

*Sympathize  
with cus-  
tomer:*

We regret very much to learn from your letter of January 4, that our attitude toward the Wilbraham guaranty has been misunderstood.

*Explain  
cause of  
dissatisfac-  
tion tact-  
fully:*

As you probably know, it has always been the attitude of the Wilbraham Company to stand back of all goods it manufactures, and to make good any defect which can be traced to faulty manufacture. In the case of the silver chest lid which you sent us, our factory experts find after thorough examination that the warping of the lid is not due in any way to faulty construction. Outward appearances strongly indicate that this chest has been kept in a damp place; and it is true that any article of wood and glue construction, if subjected to moisture, must give at the joints. In this case, the panel swelled, causing the miter to open up.

Naturally, Mrs. Ogden, it is our earnest desire to please you. In one of your letters you made the suggestion that we dress down the lid so that future swelling would not cause a repeated result. The chest could hardly be repaired in this manner and placed in its original condition. Moreover, no matter how the chest might be repaired, the same thing would happen again, should the chest again be subjected to dampness.

*Appeal to  
customer's  
sense of  
fairness;  
suggest  
remedy:*

As previously explained, if the cause of this warping were due to faulty manufacture, we would adjust the matter without a moment's hesitation, but in view of the fact that our experts feel that it was due to other conditions, mentioned above, we cannot in justice to ourselves furnish a new lid, which is what should be done, and bear the expense.

*Emphasize  
willingness  
to do your  
part:*

We have tried to explain our point of view and want you to feel that we are willing to do anything within reason to give you satisfaction. In view of this explanation, will you be so kind as to let us hear from you.

Respectfully yours,

### *Following up and Soliciting Claims*

Every just claim presents an opportunity to improve the firm's goods or service, or both. And what business is there, large or small, that does not receive or need claims? Settled satisfactorily, every claim should strengthen the customer's confidence in the seller's goods and policies to such an extent as to make him willing, even glad, to recommend the use of the firm's goods or service to others. There is many a wide-awake business house whose business shows a substantial, healthy increase, because it knows how to profit by the complaints of its customers. In fact, it should be made the rule in every business establishment to send personal letters to all customers from time to time, actually asking for complaints. Nothing will tend to make the customer realize more quickly and more effectively that the firm values his patronage than will a letter inviting and welcoming claims.

Letters soliciting claims may be sent to all customers. However, they are especially effective when addressed to those customers whose complaints have just recently been settled, or to old customers, who for some good, but unknown reason have stopped trading with the firm. In the former case their purpose is to make sure that the customer is entirely satisfied with the adjustment of his claim, so as to retain him as a permanent and active customer; in the latter case, their purpose is to regain the confidence and good-will of the old customer, to bring him back on the list of active customers. Brevity, directness, and sincerity are the essential qualities that make letters inviting claims effective. Most important of all, they should be messages with a strong personal appeal for enthusiastic coöperation in the upbuilding of the personal relationship existing between reader and writer.

Letters following up adjustments may be built on the following plan:

1. Ask briefly if goods recently shipped customer (or other service rendered in settlement of claim) were found to be satisfactory.

2. Give definite reason for wishing to make sure that customer is completely satisfied.
3. Assure customer that you have exactly the goods or service that will fully and completely meet his individual needs.
4. Suggest to customer that you would appreciate a frank expression of either approval or disapproval of the action you have taken to adjust claim.

These principles are applied in the following letter, which was written shortly after the settlement of an unusually troublesome complaint (see page 170). It brought back an enthusiastic reply from the customer with a promise to recommend the firm's goods to friends at the right time:

Dear Sir:

We are writing to ask you if you have received the Optimo Fountain Pen which we sent you on November 14, as requested in your good letter of November 12, and, if so, if it meets fully your individual requirements.

This we should like to know, because it sometimes happens that in making shipment of Optimo Self Filler Fountain Pens on the specifications of individuals, we do not always fit the exact writing requirements of the individual, because there are so many widths of points and grades of flexibility. In fact, there is an Optimo Fountain Pen for every particular style of writing.

Fortunately, there is an Optimo Self Filler Fountain Pen that writes with precision and accuracy in just the way you would like to have it write, and we want to be sure it is in your hands NOW.

We shall therefore appreciate your writing us on the back of this letter if there is any question about the pen, or if it is fully meeting your requirements.

Very truly yours,

When the problem is to regain the good-will and confidence of an old customer so that he will resume trading with the firm, the appeal may be made in accordance with the following outline:

1. Comment briefly on time elapsed since customer last traded with you.
2. Emphasize your willingness to make good any defect in accordance with your "satisfaction guaranteed" policy.
3. Stress fact that maintenance of this policy and of superior service is possible only if customer will cooperate by reporting claims promptly.

4. Assure reader of your appreciation of frank expression of his point of view.

The application of these principles is shown in the following letter, which was very successful in bringing back "lost" customers.

Gentlemen:

We have been endeavoring to recall the circumstances surrounding your last order in an effort to account for our not having had any business from you for so long.

Though it is our constant aim to afford our customers a degree of satisfaction much above the average, it is possible that there is some cause for complaint which was never brought to our attention. Should this be true in your case, don't you think we should know about it so as to have an opportunity to make the necessary corrections, late though it is?

Recently our facilities to serve you were greatly enlarged and improved. However, we feel that we can maintain our superior service and the well-known quality of our goods only if our customers will co-operate with us by making claims promptly.

Won't you please write us to let us know just what is wrong? We assure you we shall welcome any opportunity to adjust any claim you may have.

Very truly yours,

Though letters, such as the one given above, will ordinarily bring complaints, occasionally there will be replies of an entirely different nature. Thus, when the general manager of a well-known eastern hotel sent out letters to guests asking for complaints, he received among other replies the following:

Dear Mr. Dunsany:

You ask for complaints of guests. I have one. Maybe I am getting old and have a grouch. Anyway, I have believed the old world is not as good as it used to be. Politics are rotten, justice is being prostituted. Our churches are worshipping the Golden Calf, and we are going to the devil in general.

These were my thoughts as I came up from the depot on a late bus after a hard day's travel, tired, hungry, and dirty, with no thought of a welcome among strangers, but--

A bright-eyed young man made a run for the door as he saw our bunch come in, seemed to single me out as the "Grandpa" of the crowd needing most attention, relieved me of my heavy bag with a smile as he led me to the room clerk, where again I was greeted with a smile and a cheery "About a \$3 room, sir?" (Say, how did he know that at my age I take only one bath a week and had just come from the Washington at Chicago, and had had my "weekly"?)

Another smile from the good mother on the tenth, as she handed me the room key; a good night's rest between immaculate sheets, another smile from the good mother in the morning, a satisfying breakfast in the grill—without being robbed—and, say, I came here for a night, going on to Ann Arbor, but I went over on a bus and came back for three nights just to see if Washington smiles would last. They have!

Pretty durned good world after all. Folks aren't as bad as I thought. I am leaving and I should have liked to kiss the good mother on Floor 10 good-by, but I will go home and surprise my own wife with a kiss. But I want you to know my "kick"—you have stolen my dearly beloved grouch. What'll I do?

Gratefully,

### *Forestalling Complaints*

The ancient dictum that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure applies with special force to complaints. To forestall trouble is often to prevent it altogether. If, therefore, the seller finds it impossible to live up to promises which he made to his customers specifically or by implication in letters or advertisements, he should forthwith dispatch a suitable letter giving his reasons in detail. Such action on his part is likely to save the customer time, money, and annoyance, and he will appreciate it. To be more specific: if, for instance, unforeseen manufacturing, transportation, employment, financial, weather, or other conditions in or beyond the seller's control prevent him from filling and shipping orders of goods on the dates promised, he would indeed be dull if instead of notifying his customers immediately, he waited until they made their grievances known. Sometimes defective merchandise is shipped out or faulty service rendered, with neither seller nor buyer aware of the fact. When the seller does discover it, he should apologize to his customer and offer to make proper retribution. True, there are firms that purposely refrain from forestalling complaints on the theory that what the customer himself does not discover about poor quality, wrong price, faulty service, or other blunders made by

the seller, is not likely to bother him. However, such business practice is not ethical.

Letters designed to forestall complaints are excellent good-will builders, since they prove willingness on the seller's part to deal with the buyer on a basis fair and aboveboard. To exemplify, after a metropolitan department store had, in the heat of holiday haste, shipped three hundred boxes of gift candy to addresses given by customers, it discovered that clerks had inadvertently included fifty boxes of somewhat lower-quality candy. Of course, the store did not know which fifty persons had received the wrong kind of merchandise. A letter with the facts of the case was immediately dispatched to each of the three hundred recipients of the Christmas gift candy with a view to prevent probable complaints.

It left a very good impression. But few of the persons presumably affected by the blunder actually knew that the merchandise received was not as ordered; and while some of them accepted the proffered adjustment of a free box of a higher quality candy, most of them wrote friendly letters expressing satisfaction with the merchandise received. Even though the store expected no answers from those persons who had been served correctly, more than seventy per cent replied manifesting pleasure at the store's solicitude and satisfaction with its merchandise and service. According to the management these agreeable declarations of good-will repaid the store many times over for the money and effort it cost to write the three hundred letters and to replace with higher quality merchandise. A sample of the original letter, which was mailed the day after Christmas, follows:

Dear Madam:

To our great dismay, we have just discovered that among the several hundred boxes of California Fruit Candy sent out a few days ago, there were approximately fifty boxes of slightly lower quality merchandise included by mistake.

Since we mailed a box of California Fruit Candy to you, in accordance with the request of Mrs. Bennett van Loren, 67 Forest Hill Drive, Beverly Hills, California, we should like to inquire if you have received the quality of candy ordered. In case the box which you have received is marked XX on the bottom, please write us so that we may send you one of the correct quality immediately, and, of course, free of charge. You need not return the merchandise which you now have.

If an error has been made in your case, please pardon us for it and afford us an early opportunity to correct it.

Very truly yours,

Letters forestalling complaints should be concise in diction, friendly in tone, and specific in suggestion and statement of fact. They should relate briefly the circumstances which might give rise to a complaint, offer rectification, and close with assurance of good-will and an urged to reply. In no case should such letters be burdened with weak excuses or fawning apologies. On the contrary, an atmosphere of cordiality, frankness, and eagerness to serve should pervade them. Properly written and promptly posted, they become excellent builders of good-will.

### PROBLEMS IN COMPLAINTS AND ADJUSTMENTS

1. As a result of seeing an advertisement in the magazine "Home and Garden," you ordered one dozen specially priced and assorted tree roses in December from the Glenwood Nurseries, Rockboat Springs, Iowa, to be shipped April 1. Though you planted the roses immediately on their arrival, April 15, in specially prepared soil, only nine of them have grown. Even though the seller did not guarantee that the roses would grow, you feel that some adjustment is due you, especially in view of the fact that some of the roses had very poor root systems and that the seller advertised "vigorous, healthy stock." The shipment, which reached you late, was poorly packed, with the name tags of the roses torn off.

Write the seller for a definite adjustment.

2. Criticize, then rewrite, the following complaint:

Gentlemen:

Believe me, you're a smooth bunch of fellows and think you're getting away with murder, but you aren't.

When Bauer & Bauer went to the rocks and you had in Glen Aulin only my store to sell your stuff to, butter wouldn't melt in your mouth. But just as soon as one of my clerks gets himself a swelled head and goes into business for himself, of course, your slick super-salesman has to rush across the street, after selling me up to the brim, and get an order from him.

Right now, I say that I am through with your firm and its goods, and I am going to put it in the show window and let the world know how much value I put on it by selling it at what it cost me until it is gone. Then I will take a regular line—one that won't sell every Tom, Dick, and Harry that starts up in business in this one-horse town.

Disgustedly,

3. Assume that last week you had occasion to stay two days and nights at the Hanover Hotel, 49 Maryland Place, Tacoma, Washington, one of

the city's leading hotels. To-day Frank Foster, the hotel's general manager, asks you by letter if you were satisfied with the service you received at the Hanover. As a matter of fact, you did not like the service at all. Your room had inadequate facilities for ventilation, causing you to sleep poorly and the food served you in the hotel dining room was cold when it reached you. Moreover, for a five-minute long-distance telephone call, you were charged \$2.75, which is exactly 75¢ more than the call would have cost you from an ordinary pay-station. Altogether your stay at the hotel was so unsatisfactory that you have decided not to patronize it again. Write Mr. Foster accordingly.

4. Recently you ordered two Italian bridge sets at \$1.95 each from a mail-order house, which operates on a satisfaction-guaranteed or money-back basis. Upon receipt of the sets, you decide to return one of them because you do not like it. Write the seller accordingly.
5. Approximately eleven months ago, the Sandertree Transportation Company, your city, purchased a new F.B. 13 Guaranty motor truck, from the Guaranty Truck Corporation, 8 Wichita Street, Toledo, Ohio. Even though the truck has been run for only 20,000 miles, the purchaser has had to install two new rear axles. To-day the front axle on the truck broke, sixty miles north of Toledo. The truck has been a general disappointment. Assume that you are the assistant to the general manager of the Sandertree Transportation Company. Write the Guaranty Truck Corporation for a suitable adjustment.
6. A few days ago you purchased a new radio on the payment plan from a local music store. The instrument, which was delivered during your absence from home, is badly marred in three places—apparently the result of careless handling. Enter a claim against the seller, asking for an immediate adjustment.
7. Criticize, then rewrite, the following complaint, which was received by a dentist who in his advertising guarantees absolute satisfaction:

Dear Sir:

No doubt, you will be surprised to hear from one of your live ones, but as I promised to send you a saw buck on or about the 20th, I will at least write, but no ten spot. I am \$35 out and no doubt you are \$34.95 ahead.

When I was in your office, I tried to tell you that if you gave me a square deal, there was a bunch of fellows around here with plenty of cash who would be looking my teeth over when I got back, and if I wasn't bilked, the chances were a hundred to one that you would get their business. We know one another out here pretty well and I passed up dentists in Reno to get gypped in your town.

I will be back some day, but not soon. I haven't kept these clumsy contraptions in my mouth more than thirty minutes after leaving your



a contribution out of funds paid for insurance by other communities. In fact, your fire department benefited all the owners of all exposed property as well as the owners of the property immediately affected.

Regretting that we cannot consistently meet your request in this particular instance, we are

Yours very truly,

B

Dear Sir:

We have for acknowledgment your courtesy of June 5th requesting reimbursement to you by our Company for the cost of replacing city fire hose destroyed during the recent fire at the Superior Paint Works.

While the coöperation of the fire department of the City of Franklinville is very much appreciated, both by the owners of the property and their insurers, we feel that reimbursement, if any, would more properly be due from the municipality within whose boundary the fire occurred. Both our assured and our Company are heavy contributors to the maintenance of fire departments by reason of taxes paid and we frankly feel that such expenses as recited by you are properly chargeable against such funds.

Regretting very much our inability to be of assistance to you in this case, we ask to remain.

Very truly yours,

C

Dear Sir:

We hope you will pardon our delay in replying to your letter of June 5, which was mailed to our main office at New York City. A letter like this one you have sent us is one of the most difficult letters to answer.

It seems insincere to say that the insurance companies appreciate the good work which the Franklinville Fire Department did in this instance and yet be unable to make payment for some of your equipment which was seriously damaged. In several instances that have come to the writer's attention, there has even been loss of life among those who have worked in putting out fires, which has resulted in a saving to the companies of large payments under their policies, and I will admit it seems heartless that there is no provision for payments in such instances.

Of course, the Board of Directors of any insurance company view with great concern the taxes which the insurance companies are required to pay. These taxes, we appreciate, go to the Federal and State Government and therefore there is not much consolation in this fact for a City Fire Department.

As already indicated, we would rather almost do anything than have to answer your letter in this manner, but we have written a little

at length, hoping that you will have a sympathetic understanding of our position in this matter.

Very truly yours,

9. What changes would you make in any one of the preceding letters? Rewrite the city attorney's letter.
10. To-day you receive a suit of clothes, which you ordered personally two weeks ago from a tailor in a neighboring city, and for which you paid cash in advance to the amount of sixty dollars. You find that the coat and trousers of your suit do not fit you properly. Furthermore, your local tailor, to whom you took the suit for inspection, informs you that it is a very poor fit indeed, and that extensive alterations are necessary to produce even a fair fit.

This is a distinct disappointment to you, especially since perfect fit and satisfaction were guaranteed. You, therefore, decide to return the suit to the seller and to ask for a refund of the purchase price.

Write the letter.

11. Mrs. Tom Bridges, 2968 Winchell Road, Lafayette, Indiana, sent one of her bracelets for repair to the Elite Jewelers, 579 West Seventh Street, Indianapolis, Indiana, who used a diamond and an emerald for the purpose. In sending her a \$35 bill for the repair, the salesman neglected to include \$60—the cost of the diamond. Upon receipt of the bill, Mrs. Bridge expressed surprise at the low repair cost and inquired concerning the quality of workmanship and materials used. She has not paid the bill yet.

a rate of \$4.00 an hour for an auto van and two men, he gave me an estimate of \$24.00. Since the actual amount of the bill paid by me was \$32.00, I feel that I am entitled to some consideration in this respect.

Please write me promptly.

Yours very truly,

As adjustment correspondent of the firm named above, settle this complaint. Mr. Peterson, your firm's service manager, will be at your customer's residence next Monday morning, between 9 and 12 a.m., to replace the broken light fixture. While your firm's representatives are not authorized to quote flat prices on moving, they endeavor to make their estimates as close as possible. It is difficult for anyone by looking through a residence to estimate accurately the necessary time required for moving the furniture. The \$4 rate is fair, as is the total amount of the bill, even though it is higher than the original estimate. However, your policy is to satisfy your customers and if Miss Diemler thinks that your men were longer on the job than they should have been, you will gladly make her a suitable allowance. Write Miss Diemler accordingly.

13. Arthur Jenkins, manager of the Wecker Remedy Company, 910 Jackson Avenue, Charlotte, N. C., has complained of slow and poor deliveries of orders to the Home Remedies Corporation, 714 Medical Arts Building, Fort Worth, Texas. He cites a special case in which a shipment of a rush order was not received until 10 days after the order was placed.

As assistant to the general manager of the Home Remedies Corporation, write Mr. Jenkins to the effect that his particular rush order through some misunderstanding failed to receive the OK of the credit department promptly, and that during the past week it has been impossible for your firm to make immediate deliveries of rush orders. Normally the number of orders handled by your firm is approximately 500 a day, whereas you have been receiving approximately 1500 orders a day. Even though your firm gives preference to old customers in filling orders, the rush of business has slowed up deliveries considerably. Your firm is making every effort to improve its delivery service. Should customer experience further delays, ask him to write you again.

14. The Idaho Sporting Goods Company, 465 Market Street, Boise, Idaho, has received a letter from Mrs. Walter Moormeister, 167 E. South Temple Street, Salt Lake City, Utah, in which she states that the Thermos Jug which she purchased and which she needs very much, arrived in broken condition.

As correspondent of the firm mentioned above, adjust this matter. You wired your firm's customer upon receipt of her complaint as follows: "Please return jug parcel post for replacement." You will ship a new jug free of charge as soon as you receive the broken one. Ask customer to go to the post office for blanks on which to make proper claim for damage in transit. Write Mrs. Moormeister accordingly.

15. The Claypool Department Store, Laconia, N. H., has to-day received a complaint from Mrs. Smythe Reynolds, 2300 Loraine Road, Monticello, N. H., that the bowl of candy, a birthday gift, which the latter had purchased in the store and had ordered sent to her sister, had arrived in bad condition. It was broken in transit apparently because it was carelessly packed.

As adjustment correspondent of the Claypool Department Store, write Mrs. Reynolds asking for her sister's name and address as well as the sales check, so that you may investigate the matter. Ascertain also if customer wants other merchandise in replacement or refund of the purchase price.

16. You have just been appointed manager of the World Book Company, 892 Hampton Road, Lafayette, Indiana.

In going over the correspondence of your department you chance to run across the following paragraph in a letter recently received from a customer:

salesman who recently called on C. F. Erikson, the leading grocer in Monticello, Iowa, a town of about five thousand population, reported that he failed to secure an order from Mr. Erikson, because he got into a rather heated discussion with the latter over the display and sale of Heinz's products.

In his report your salesman asked you to write Mr. Erikson immediately for the purpose of retaining his good-will and of selling him an order of goods, if possible. As a matter of fact, you have written Mr. Erikson three letters, enclosing a stamped, self-addressed envelope each time.

To-day you receive the following reply from Mr. Erikson:

Monticello, Iowa,  
5-1—

F. Heinz Company,  
68 Tagonda Street,  
Chicago, Illinois

Sirs:

In reply to your letters, in fact I have not recd. your two first letters and the reason why—when your salesman was at my place, he tried to tell me what I ought to do and what to put on my shelves and I think it is none of his business what kind of goods I sell for I do not owe him anything.

N.B. I always sold Heinz Soups and expect to do the same in the future. Good-by.

(Signed) C. F. Erikson.

Prepare an answer to this letter. Adjust Mr. Erikson's "grievance."

Call his attention to a new booklet "Helps for the Hostess," copy of which you enclose. Say that you will be glad to furnish him with as many of these booklets as he may wish for distribution to his customers. Offer to supply him with free advertising matter, and also to assist him in other ways in the sale of your various products.

18. As correspondent in the subscribers' service department of the "Happy Homes" farm magazine, your work consists mainly of helping subscribers who are unable to get satisfactory adjustments of complaints from firms advertising in this magazine. Its publishers will not accept advertisements from firms selling unreliable goods or maintaining unfair or unethical policies. They make every effort to protect subscribers who purchase merchandise or service advertised in "Happy Homes."

To-day Chas. F. Coolidge, Indian Springs, Minnesota, writes your firm as follows:

Two months ago I sent for an oil brooder to the Iowa Brooder Company, Sigourney, Iowa. I set it up and used it according to their

printed instructions, but was unable to get it to work. I sent it back about 3 weeks ago, but cannot get my money back. Since I read the ad in your magazine, I thought I could get you to help me get my \$19.75 back from this outfit.

Assure Mr. Coolidge of your coöperation in this matter. So far as you know the Iowa Brooder Company is reliable, it having advertised in "Happy Homes" for many years. Ordinarily brooder companies do not sell their products on a money-back basis. However, they guarantee the material and workmanship in their machines and will make replacements if need be. Write your subscriber accordingly.

Now prepare a suitable letter for the Iowa Brooder Company, enclosing a copy of the original complaint. Say that you expect a satisfactory adjustment even though you believe your subscriber was wrong in returning the brooder without the seller's permission.

19. Three weeks ago, Peter Baines, 59 State Street, Wooden, Kansas, placed an order for two library chairs with the Artistic Furniture Company, 489 Elm Street, Emporia, Kansas, to be shipped not later than two weeks after receipt of order. Not having received the chairs yet, he has written the seller threatening to cancel his order unless it be shipped immediately.

As adjustment correspondent of the firm named above, explain to Mr. Baines, an old customer of your firm, that even though your firm guarantees prompt shipment of orders for furniture in stock, it had to make up these chairs first. They will be shipped to-morrow without fail. Add anything else which, in your opinion, is likely to retain the customer's good-will.

20. Carl Robin, general manager of the East Auto Supply Company, 4 Euclid Street, Cleveland, Ohio, has received a complaint from Franklin Saunders, 7 Linden Avenue, Wilmar, Ohio, a suburb of Cleveland. The latter writes that recently a clerk at the Wilmar Branch store of the East Auto Supply Company refused to cash a check, even though Mr. Saunders offered complete identification. Mr. Saunders was particularly annoyed by the gruff manner in which the clerk refused the check, and by the fact that this is the first time that the firm did not accept his check in payment of merchandise.

As assistant to Mr. Robins, write Mr. Saunders, an old customer of your firm, whose financial rating is only fair. Explain that a month ago all branch managers of your firm's retail stores were instructed to accept only cash in payment of merchandise. This change of policy was prompted by frequent losses on bad checks and exorbitant rates on insurance against such risks. One important reason why the E.A.S.C. can furnish quality merchandise at low prices is that it has no credit and few cash losses. Write Mr. Saunders accordingly and with a view to retaining his good-will.

21. Walter Winchester, R.F.D. 3, Maxwell, Okla., has written to the firm mentioned in the foregoing problem, that he was unable to obtain a satis-

factory adjustment on an Everwear tire purchased at the Maxwell branch store three months ago. He states that the side walls of the tire, which was run approximately four thousand miles, cracked and broke down, and that the store manager offered him an allowance of 75¢ for the old tire on the purchase price of a new one. He asks for an allowance of \$2.50, which is half of the original purchase price. The seller's policy is to adjust complaints caused by defective workmanship or materials. Ordinarily when the side walls of a tire break, it is a sign that the tire has been run underinflated or overloaded.

Write Mr. Winchester that you have asked the manager of the Maxwell branch store to examine the tire once more, and assure your customer of fair treatment in the matter.

Also write Robert Bush, manager of the Maxwell store, urging him to make Mr. Winchester, a new customer, a somewhat more liberal allowance on his old tire.

22. Miss Eva Delaney, 469 Rose Street, Walla Walla, Washington, writes to the White House, 9 Fremont Street, Seattle, Washington, that she has not received the two dresses which she ordered a week ago. The seller's records indicate that the merchandise was shipped by parcel post on the day the order was received.

As correspondent of the White House, write Miss Delaney that you are tracing the shipment and that you will notify her as soon as you receive definite information from the postmaster.

23. Miss Delaney has returned to the firm mentioned in Problem 22 a pair of chiffon hose for adjustment. They are worn through at the toes. Since The White House does not guarantee chiffon hose against wearing through at the toes or heels, it cannot replace this pair. If the merchandise were defective, an adjustment would be made promptly.

Notify Miss Delaney of the firm's stand in the matter. The merchandise is being returned to her.

24. The president of the Wisconsin Motor Truck Corporation, 4 First Avenue, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, finds the following letter from James B. Starling, Lafollette, Wisconsin, in his morning's mail:

Dear Sir:

I very much dislike to call your personal attention to a letter that I received from your credit department in connection with the payment of my service account. I will admit that it is long past due, but I feel that it was not necessary to threaten me with legal proceedings to collect the amount.

I do not believe that you approve of sending anyone threatening letters which do not frighten me in the least, and if I receive another such letter, I will sell my truck and never purchase another from you.

Yours truly,

Assume that this letter has been given to you, the assistant to the president, for reply. The credit department informs you that Mr. Starling's account is three months past due and that he has not answered a single one of the six collection letters sent him in the regular routine. The threat to which customer objects was contained in the last letter. The \$150 balance due on the account is still unpaid. Prepare a letter that will collect this amount and at the same time keep the customer's good-will.

25. Assume that you are employed by the Eternite Fence Company, Rockford, Illinois, as correspondent. Your firm conducts a direct-to-consumer fence business, shipping its products into almost every state of the union. It guarantees its goods to be as represented in its catalogue, which is furnished free of charge to anyone who asks for it. The terms are either cash in advance, or, if C.O.D. is preferred, then 25% of the total purchase price is to accompany order.

Recently you filled a cash-in-advance order for fencing, amounting to \$85.00, for Frank Armstrong, R.F.D. 3, Delhi, Iowa, to whom a catalogue had been sent previously upon request.

On receipt of the shipment, Mr. Armstrong sent you a second order, also selected from the catalogue, as shown by the size of wire ordered, etc., amounting to \$225. This time he ordered heavy fencing.

Because customer had paid cash in advance for the first order, your firm naturally supposed his credit "gilt-edge," and shipped the second order by freight with sight draft attached to bill of lading, thus not even requiring the customary 25% of the total purchase price in advance.

To-day you receive a letter from Mr. Armstrong in which he acknowledges receipt of the second shipment of fencing. However, he now refuses to keep the first shipment of fencing, saying that the wire is too light for his purposes and that he prefers the heavy kind of wire. Moreover, he states that he will honor the sight draft attached to the bill of lading covering the second shipment only if you will permit him to return the first shipment to you, at the same time refunding freight charges which he paid on it.

During all this time storage charges are accruing for every day for which the second shipment remains unclaimed. If customer should be permitted to return the first shipment and be reimbursed for the freight he paid on it, your firm would be "out" about \$40.00—the refund plus the return freight charges. Furthermore, even if this concession should be granted, you would have no positive assurance of his accepting the second shipment.

You are now asked to prepare a letter that will adjust this claim to the satisfaction of both, your customer and your firm. In other words, the purpose of your letter is to induce customer not only to keep the first shipment for the time being, but also to accept the second shipment by



paying the sight draft attached to the bill of lading as well as the accrued storage charges. It is clear that unless you handle this case properly, your customer will refuse to accept the second C.O.D. shipment, in which case your firm would not only have to pay the accrued storage charges, but also the transportation charges on the shipment both ways, which would be a considerable item, and more than your profit on the shipment.

Adjust this matter so as to retain, if at all possible, the good-will of the customer.

26. You are employed in the Adjustment Department of the Eternite Fence Company, Rockford, Illinois, a firm selling wire fences, etc., direct to the consumer. Your fencing is manufactured on automatic looms which register the exact number of rods to each roll. As soon as completed, an identification tag is attached to each roll. On this tag is found information concerning the style of fencing, the number of rods in the roll, and the operator's number. In case of claim, the customer is asked to return this tag promptly for adjustment.

All outgoing material is loaded into cars at your own platform and is carefully checked by the head of your shipping department. The railroad station from which cars are loaded at your factory platform is small. Its agent knows your firm so well, and has done business with it so long that he does not deem it necessary to check over any of your outgoing shipments. On the contrary, he accepts them without inspection and question.

Three weeks ago your firm received a first order for forty rods each of #15 and #16 (two different styles) fencing from Chas. D. Huffcutt, Elmore, Illinois, which is a distance of about 150 miles from your factory. This order, for which customer had paid cash in advance, was shipped him promptly.

After accepting this shipment, the customer wrote your firm about two weeks ago, saying he had received only twenty rods each instead of forty rods each, as ordered. This fact, he said, could, if necessary, be testified to by several witnesses. Not doubting his word, the Eternite Fence Company promptly sent him two more rolls of fencing, this time a twenty-rod roll each to make up shortage on the first order. This action was taken solely on the strength of the customer's word, he having obtained no freight bill or other concrete evidence showing shortage which he claimed in his letter.

Four days ago you received another letter from him, acknowledging receipt of the second shipment of fencing. In his letter he informs you that the rolls shipped him this time are only ten rods long, and that you therefore still owe him ten rods of #15 and #16 fencing.

You immediately answered his letter, requesting him to return identification tags attached to each roll of fencing. The customer replies to the effect that he is unable to find these tags, which were, no doubt, lost. He

is, moreover, unable to produce bill of lading showing agent's notation of shortage.

In the meantime, and ever since customer claimed shortage on the second shipment, you wrote to three bankers in Elmore, Illinois, explaining matters to them and asking for information concerning your customer's past record and his character. Two of the bankers replied to the effect that Mr. Huffcutt's standing in the community was anything but good, and that they would not trust him under any circumstances. This information, together with the effect which his second shortage claim had on you, leads you to believe that customer is trying to defraud your firm. Your policy in this respect is to believe a man honest until he proves himself to be otherwise.

You are now asked to write Chas. D. Huffcutt, R.F.D. 1, Elmore, Illinois, a letter that will bring *payment in full for the second shipment of wire*, for it is quite plain to you that customer's first as well as his second claim of shortage is fraudulent. State your case clearly and most emphatically. Threaten to send one of your own men to his farm to measure the fencing shipped him.

27. Four weeks ago, the Eternite Fence Company, the firm mentioned in Problems 25 and 26, received an order for wire fencing from John Sterling, Wilton, Missouri. No mention was made in customer's letter that shipment must reach his railroad station by a certain date.

The shipment of wire was delivered to the railway company by you exactly three weeks ago. In this morning's mail you received a letter from John Sterling saying that he had not yet received his order, and that he would not accept it unless it should reach him within a week from the date of his letter, which was written three days ago.

Write John Sterling to remind him of the fact that since his order did not specify delivery by a certain date, it is not subject to cancellation. A similar statement appears on all your letterheads, invoices, etc. However, you are asking the railroad company to trace the shipment. Add anything else which you deem advisable, and which may aid you in inducing customer to accept the shipment, even if it should arrive later than the date specified.

28. The American Automobile Company, 6400 Moon Street, Detroit, Mich., is in receipt of the following complaint from Benjamin Blair, 27 Pine Hills Drive, Greensboro, N. C.:

Gentlemen:

Recently I have been hearing your program over the radio, wherein you are giving away certain automobiles. I am a little surprised to think that you would be doing this advertising when I have one of your cars which has been very unsatisfactory and been a source of expense to me ever since I bought it. All I have asked is that I would be relieved

from this unnecessary expense—that I be given another car or a satisfactory adjustment.

The cylinders have cracked three different times and I have been unable to get a fair adjustment from your local dealer. This car is in such shape that both my wife and I will not take it out for any distance for fear that we will have to be pulled in. I have endeavored to make amicable adjustment on this matter, but if it cannot be done, I am going to use my influence with the county to see that you sell no cars in this county. And I shall let the service I have received on this car be known generally. You surely cannot say that you have a satisfied customer in me with the treatment that I have had in this expensive deal.

Yours truly,

As adjustment correspondent of the firm mentioned above, write Mr. Blair that your firm will be glad to send a representative to obtain first-hand information concerning the present condition of the car. Ask him to specify time and place for a meeting. Your firm is vitally interested in the degree of satisfaction given by every American motor car. This car has been on the market now for two years.

29. As correspondent in the adjustment department of the Gray Nurseries, Graydorf, Michigan, you have been handed the names of six customers who have failed to place any orders since the adjustment of their respective claims a year ago.

Write them to ascertain, if possible, the reason for this silence. Send each a copy of your new spring catalogue just off the press.

30. Assume that you are the owner and manager of The Mirage, a small high-grade hotel in Wilmington, Delaware. Your business during the past six months has for some unknown reason fallen 27 per cent below that done during a similar period last year. Among your guests you miss a number of familiar faces. Write a suitable letter to be sent to persons who, though old guests of The Mirage, have not patronized it during the past six months, for the purpose of inviting complaints.
31. Owing to a serious fire which destroyed the greater portion of their warehouse, the Webber Wholesale Grocers, 8 Henshaw Street, Minneapolis, Minnesota, find it impossible to ship orders to retailers on the dates promised. As general correspondent of this firm, prepare a letter to be sent to all customers informing them that orders booked for immediate shipment will be forwarded a week or ten days later than promised. All orders booked for future shipment will be forwarded from your Waterloo, Iowa, warehouse on time. Your firm is doing everything in its power to give its customers the usual careful and prompt service.
32. By means of a suitable letter, follow up the adjustment of the complaint given in Problem 19.

## CHAPTER XI

### CREDITS

#### *General Character and Importance*

The fact that nine out of every ten business transactions involve no payment of cash whatsoever, but are made solely on the basis of credit—the express or implied promise of the purchaser to pay on demand or at some specified *future* time for the goods or services received—testifies most emphatically to both the extent and the importance of credit.

Credit is productive wealth to every business man. It is a necessity for most business men. Without it they would be compelled to restrict their business operations appreciably, and not a few would probably find it necessary and expedient to suspend business altogether because of the lack of sufficient and ready cash. With credit at their command, business men can place more and larger orders and so increase the volume of their business, and consequently their profits.

The foundation on which the tremendous and vital structure of business credit rests is faith—faith on the part of the seller in the buyer's financial ability and honest intention to pay cash at some definite future date for commodities sold on time. It is this confidence and trust in the other man's integrity that begets like confidence. The average business man is straight in his dealings. In fact, it is the established custom to believe every man doing business to be thoroughly reliable and trustworthy until his actions warrant a forfeiture of such trust.

#### *General and Specific Purpose*

Credit letters originate in the credit department, one of the most essential parts of any business organization. The purpose of this department is to carry out those rules and regulations of the house which will establish reasonably safe and mutually profitable relationships with the customers. Every credit department worthy of its name maintains a definite policy. It *sells* to the customer most essential service—terms and time.

No matter what its particular mission, every credit letter should clearly and positively express these two important considerations:

1. That credit is a valuable business service to the customer.
2. That such service is rendered only in accordance with definitely established and rigidly adhered to business principles and regulations.

It should be the invariable policy of the credit man to assist the sales department in shipping *all* the orders it has received, provided, of course, it is safe and profitable to do so. This, then, is the vital function of the credit man—to help sell all the goods possible, if not on the strength of credit, then on the basis of cash, or security, but at all events to sell them profitably.

### *All-Essential Qualities*

The attitude of the credit manager of a large department store whose daily duty it is to grant credit to customers in face-to-face interview is one of sympathetic confidence in the other person's willingness and ability to meet his financial obligations promptly. Above all else he is tactful in what he says, cautious in what he promises, and consistent in what he finally does. Being essentially a salesman, his talk and actions are suggestive of personal service to the customer, his manner and bearing reflective of the dignity and seriousness of the matter under consideration. At no time does he forget that a sound credit policy is absolutely essential to a mutually profitable business relationship between his firm and its customers.

The credit correspondent should make certain that his letters project qualities similar to those possessed and expressed by the efficient credit manager of a department store. The positive tone of the credit letter should stand out pleasantly so as to inspire the reader with confidence in the writer's purpose to treat him fairly, and to impress him with the dignity and responsibility of the latter's position and the prime importance of the service he is able to render.

An atmosphere of tact should pervade every credit letter. This means among other things that the use of negative suggestion as evidenced in sentences like: "We are sorry to learn that we offended in our letter of June 4," or "Now, Mr. Smith, we don't in the least question your honesty or ability to pay," etc., should be shunned religiously. The hopeful, the positive side of the particular situation under consideration should always be brought to the foreground, while the negative, the unpleasant factors should be either entirely omitted or softened and hidden in unemphatic positions within the letter. In sum, effective credit letters should be cordial in their attitude, positive in their tone, conservative in their statements, and tactful from the "Dear Sir" to the "Yours truly."

### *Rare Opportunity of the Credit Letter*

Every credit letter should be a getter and begetter of good-will. As such its distinct opportunity lies in the fact that credit itself is primarily a service to the customer. This spirit of service, while it should not be overemphasized, should be the life-spirit of every credit letter. Appropriately expressed, it will strengthen the reader's confidence in the writer's house, and so win his business and his personal good-will.

Service-plus should be the keynote even in letters to persons whose present financial standing and ability make it advisable to refuse credit. Why? Because here their opportunity is to gain a customer by showing frankly and diplomatically just why it would not be good business common sense for him to receive credit under the circumstances and why for the time being he should confine himself to cash transactions. Thus, often, doubtful orders may be turned into good, acceptable ones.

In cases where credit has been extended to a new customer, it becomes necessary for the credit man to educate the customer to the terms and general credit policy of the house. This is best done by stressing the advantages and the character of credit at opportune times so that the customer will finally come to regard it as a valuable, necessary business service, which he cannot permit himself to forfeit by not complying with the terms and regulations under which it was first granted.

It should also be noted here, that wide-awake credit men furnish their customers with reliable, up-to-date information concerning price conditions, market conditions, and business conditions in general. Data of this nature are often given the customer in weekly or monthly bulletin form. Such coöperation and service will sooner or later lead the customer to rely more and more on the written opinion of the credit man and to turn to him when in financial trouble or when in need of financial information.

The credit letter should be made the means through which a business firm may, by extending credit liberally, but cautiously, shape its financial relationship to its customers in accordance with a well-defined, systematic plan. Its far-reaching and most beneficial value is found in its educative influence upon the paying and other vital business habits of the customer. If the customers of a firm meet their bills promptly when they fall due, it is in a large measure the natural consequence of a firm and common-sense policy of credit. If, on the other hand, a large number of the house's debtors are decidedly "slow pay," it may safely be assumed that this condition is the inevitable result of a lax credit policy, which must sooner

or later prove disastrous to the business. In other words, a strong, consistent credit policy will naturally result in making collections easy.

### *Asking for Credit Information*

Manufacturers, jobbers, or wholesalers give credit only after they have obtained reliable advice regarding the customer's "three C's"—

Character

Capital

Capacity.

So far as his character is concerned, they will seek satisfactory answers to these and other questions: What is the customer's personal and financial standing in his community? Are his personal and business habits good, that is, clean, properly conservative yet making for progress? Has his business honesty or integrity ever been questioned?

Information bearing on his capital would include the following: the amount of his total capital investment; its condition at present; the total amount of his operating expenses over a definite period of time and their relationship to assets and liabilities; his assets and liabilities, their kind, and their proportion to one another; the amount of cash that could be realized from a forced sale of the assets; the extent to which the assets and the customer's property in general are protected by insurance and other means.

Questions touching on the customer's capacity should follow these general lines: what is his age, the state of his health, his habits, his training, etc.? How long has he been in business and with what degree of success? Is he making good or running behind? Has he ever failed in business? What are the general business conditions in the customer's locality and vicinity? How does competition affect his business, and how does he meet it?

Important data on which to base a reliable estimate as to whether the customer is a good or a bad risk are generally obtained from these sources:

1. *Commercial agencies, such as Dun's and Bradstreet's.* Their books will give the customer's financial rating, or, in case he is not listed, these agencies will furnish a special, confidential report on his credit and business standing.

2. *Banks, attorneys, and reputable business men in the customer's locality.* These sources will usually be found willing, if not glad, to supply the information asked for.

3. *Other wholesalers, manufacturers, and jobbers.* They may be written to, if the customer is known to have dealt, or to be dealing, with them.

4. *Salesmen.* Reports made by the firm's own salesmen will frequently furnish very complete and valuable data about the customer, because the salesmen come into personal contact with the retailer. They are therefore more able to judge him. Moreover, they see his business and his methods of carrying it on, at first hand. However, it is very necessary that the salesmen's reports be founded on facts, and not on mere personal opinions, which may be colored and entirely misleading.

5. *From the customer direct.* To obtain credit information from outside sources most business houses will use blanks which they ask their prospective customers to fill out. In this manner the seller is sure to obtain more or less uniform information on paper of like size which may be filed away conveniently for future reference. As soon as sufficient credit data regarding a customer have been assembled, they are evaluated, organized, filed, and revised from time to time. In this way, the credit department will have as complete and recent financial information about the firm's buyers as it is possible to get.

6. *From credit bureaus.* Manufacturers', wholesalers', and retailers' organizations maintain exceptionally well-equipped, up-to-date credit bureaus in almost every city. The investigation and information services rendered by such bureaus are so thorough and so extensive that dependable data concerning the financial habits of a firm or a person are furnished with surprising dispatch often on a moment's notice. A satisfactory report on a risk furnished by a credit bureau usually constitutes sufficient justification for shipping a first order of goods or for opening a new account. The business man who is a member of a credit association will, before seeking information from other sources, use its service first.

### *Writing to the Customer for Information*

This becomes necessary when data from commercial agencies and other sources are either unsatisfactory, too old, or altogether unobtainable. In most cases the customer is asked merely to fill out a so-called *signed property statement*. The answers to questions given by him on this statement will indicate in more or less detail his financial standing and constitute the seller's basis for granting or refusing credit.

When going direct to the customer for credit information, it is best to approach him in a businesslike, frank, and positive way. Instead of apologizing for asking the buyer for personal and confidential data, make him realize that, since his and your interests are identical in the matter, it



let him know just how your credit department is going to help him. Begin educating your new customer to the financial policy of your firm in the very first letter. If you do this in a tactful and friendly way, he will appreciate it. Moreover, such foresight will forestall slow payments and bad debts, which so often result from a lax, unprogressive, and unsystematic policy. Inject conservative salesmanship into every credit letter that is written over your signature. Remember you are not to squander credit—you are to *sell* it. For, in return for the service you give, you expect to receive your buyer's confidence, his business good-will, his willing compliance with your terms and financial rules, and, most important of all, his business.

The information which letters giving credit convey should be presented in this order:

1. Express pleasure over receipt of satisfactory information concerning buyer's financial affairs.
2. Give necessary information about customer's order, such as shipping date, terms, etc., which will show him that the order is being given personal attention.
3. Close with selling talk designed to establish cordial business relations and to pave the way for further business. Offer, where suitable, services of both the credit department and the dealer—service department.

The application of these principles is shown in the following letter:

Gentlemen:

We are glad to say that the information which we have received from the references you have given us and also that contained in your signed property statement is plain and satisfactory.

Your order of December 14, our No. 678 A, for three cases of Peerless Soap, will go forward to you to-day, December 21, by fast B. & O. freight. These goods are billed to you under the terms 2/10; n/30.

The demand created for Peerless Soap by our national and local magazine and newspaper advertising should enable you to dispose of the three cases in record time and at a good profit. We are sending you to-day by parcel post some attractive advertising matter for your counter and window display.

It is our desire to co-operate with you in every possible way to make the sale of Peerless Soap most profitable to you. Feel free therefore to write us on any matter pertaining to the sale of our products or the handling of your account. You

will find both our dealer-service department and our credit department willing and ready to assist you in whatever manner they can.

Yours very truly,

### *Refusing Credit*

Refusing credit to a prospective buyer should by no means incur the loss of his account. On the contrary, letters refusing credit should send forth such a spirit of friendliness, open-mindedness, and diplomacy as to convince the retailer of the fairness and justice of the writer's stand in the matter of credit and secure his trade on some other and, for the present, more satisfactory basis. Of course, where the financial information received is of such negative character as to make trade with the prospective buyer unprofitable on any sound basis, he need be written only a brief, courteous letter of refusal that will in no way reflect on his honesty or ability.

However, the majority of prospective customers whose applications for credit must be declined will be retailers to whom terms and time may be extended at some later date when their affairs are in a more secure and promising condition. They must be given reasons and explanations as to why it would not be fair *to them* to grant credit. Thus their confidence must be gained, their good-will cultivated, their business secured on terms of cash, or good security, if at all possible. The advantage of a discount for cash must be made attractive to them.

Naturally, it is not an easy task to "turn down" a potential customer and still win his trade. However, a carefully planned letter, free from all negative suggestion and reflection on the retailer's present insecure financial position, but full of positive, doubt-dispelling, confidence-developing statements—a letter that shows sympathetic, personal interest in the retailer's problems and manifests a warm desire to be of service will in many cases win a customer and friend for the firm. The statement of refusal in such letters should appear in some unobtrusive place in the letter, probably in the middle, so that it may be preceded in the opening paragraphs by pleasant matter designed to put the reader in the proper frame of mind, and followed in later paragraphs by statements that will leave a lasting, favorable impression with him. In other words, a letter refusing credit both begins and ends with a sincere, warm smile, thus removing all possible sting.

The general plan on which such a letter may well be prepared is as follows:

1. Acknowledge pleasantly receipt of financial information from customer and other sources.
2. Analyze from customer's point of view briefly and tactfully, but openly, his present financial standing, first emphasizing its good points, then leading carefully over to its less favorable aspects. (Always support your statements by good reasons.)
3. Suggest solution of customer's financial problem in a way to obtain his good-will and business.
4. Close offering reader coöperation of your firm in matters of sales and credits (so far as is consistent with his present standing).

*The Negative Way of Refusing Credit*

(It is certain to lose the prospective customer.)

Gentlemen:

In response to your favor of the 16th inst. we have to say that we shall have to ask you to pay cash before filling your order.

While we do not doubt your ability as a business man or your honesty, yet we feel that the information about your business standing furnished us is of such a character as to justify our requiring cash in advance.

In view of this fact we trust that you will see your way clear to remit cash now so that we may ship your goods at once.

Hoping to receive an immediate and favorable reply from you with check for order, we are

Very truly yours,

*The Positive Way of Refusing Credit*

(Following the plan suggested above.)

Gentlemen:

We are glad to get the information in the financial statement which you returned to us under date of March 2, as it will enable us to serve you better now and in the future.

We note with interest that your sales show a substantial growth during the four months you have been in business. Analyzing the figures you sent us, we are obliged to conclude that your liabilities are excessive for the amount of your quick assets. It seems to us that you are somewhat overstocked. Of course, you realize that under present conditions of falling prices this is a dangerous position to be in, especially for a new business.

upon the buyer the necessity of coöperating with the seller by complying with his terms.

The material in a letter calling attention to a violation or oversight of the seller's terms may be arranged in this fashion:

1. Acknowledge receipt of customer's remittance and introduce the subject of the letter.
2. Explain definitely the discount terms in customer's case.
3. Call attention to the "short" payment and say why you cannot allow it.
4. Return check and ask for prompt remittance for correct amount.

### ILLUSTRATION

Gentlemen:

Thank you for your check for \$74.40 in payment of our invoice No. 3321, of June 15, amounting to \$80.00. At the same time we wish to call your attention to our terms, which you apparently misunderstood.

According to the invoice you were entitled to a quantity discount of 5%, and also a cash discount of 2%, if you paid within ten days from date of invoice. The quantity discount, or 5% of \$80.00, is \$4.00, which brings the amount of the bill to \$76.00. From this amount (\$76.00) you could have deducted the cash discount of 2%, or \$1.52, had you paid the bill before June 25. This would have brought the amount of the bill to \$74.48.

Unfortunately, your remittance was neither made out for the correct amount, nor did it reach us in time to allow us to give you the benefit of the cash discount of 2%. Now, if we were to allow this discount under the present circumstances, it would only be fair to make similar exception in the case of our numerous other customers. Such practice once resorted to, would, you will readily see, soon disrupt our entire credit system.

For these reasons, and also because the net amount of the bill will not be due until July 15, we thought it best to return the check to you. Please send us one for the correct amount in due time.

Very truly yours,

### *Writing Credit Letters to Retail Customers*

Even though most transactions designed to regulate and to maintain suitable credit relations between the retailer and the consumer are handled by means of personal, face-to-face contact, still the letter, which is at once

inexpensive, convenient, and private, furnishing a record in black on white and therefore valuable protection in case of fraud, is by no means neglected as an instrument of communication. As a matter of fact, the steadily growing number of retail charge accounts, especially in the large cities, not to mention instalment accounts, has resulted in a greater and more varied use of the letter in the merchant's credit department.

The two letters following are used by a metropolitan department store dealing largely with middle-class women. Observe how their writer endeavors to cultivate consumer good-will:

Dear Madam:

forms are used for this purpose, every effort is made to give them the tone and appearance of personally dictated messages.

The following letters are representative of the kind of progressive sales efforts made by an up-to-date haberdasher first to obtain desirable charge accounts and afterwards to keep them in as active a condition as possible. The first three bore the signature of the president of the firm, the last two that of the manager of the department of accounts. Time intervals between letters one and two, and between letters two and three, respectively, were approximately one month. Letter four was mailed six months after the opening of the account, and letter five one month after letter four. In other words, the letters did not arrive in short succession, thus avoiding the impression that they were part of a follow-up or "hurry-up" system. In view of the fact that all five letters produced good results, they are well worth careful study and analysis.

## I

Dear Mr. Bright:

There are many business men who are enjoying the privileges of a charge account here, and we should like to number you among them.

As undoubtedly you know, a charge account is not only a convenient way to shop, but it establishes a credit rating with the retail merchants—a valuable advantage.

We believe you will like our store, Mr. Bright. Its merchandise is live, up-to-the-minute, and the prices are consistently moderate.

In addition to the merchandise, there are such features as a Golf Shop with practice courts and a six-chair Barber Shop—the last word in tonsorial service.

We shall be pleased to have you visit the store at any time. When you make a purchase, just ask the sales person to "Charge it."

As is customary, statements are mailed the first of each month—payable thirty days from date of purchase.

Cordially yours,

Just now our "Mid-summer Clothing Event" is in progress. Suits and overcoats at \$28.50, \$38.50, \$48.50, and \$58.50 represent remarkable savings. The majority of these are "Fashion Park" and "Kuppenheimer" makes. A splendid opportunity to make initial use of your charge account.

If you have experienced any breach of service etiquette, won't you let me know?

Thank you for your co-operation.

Sincerely yours,

5

Dear Mr. Bright:

Why not CHARGE IT as you used to? That is what I have been wondering about ever sinoo I wrote you March 22.

As good friends are rare, our natural desire is to hold them. The business you have given us has always been appreciated, and we want you to come here again--regularly.

If the enclosed card will sufficiently convey your message, won't you check it and mail it to-day? Or, just telephone me personally about it.

Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

NOTE: Attached to this letter were a stamped, addressed envelope and a printed card, reading, in part, as follows:

Why I am not using my Charge Account at Bell's

(Please check)

....Service	....Paying Cash	....Discourtesy	
....Merchandise	....Unkept Promise	....Delivery	....Alterations
Remarks .....			

The following letter will indicate the kind of appeal made to a prospective charge customer who has not accepted the offer of credit made him. It was signed by the president of the firm. Attached to the letter was a government post-card, reading: "I appreciate your courtesy in extending to me the privilege of a charge account, and I shall be glad to make use of it." It was to be signed and returned by the recipient.

Dear Mr. Johns:

Some time ago we had the pleasure of inviting you to use our Charge Account service, but so far you have apparently had no occasion to call on us for it.

Although you are undoubtedly favoring us with your patronage in different departments, it gives us a closer feeling of co-operation to know that you're enjoying just such facilities as this charge account provides—one that should prove especially convenient with the holidays so near.

We are so confident of your appreciation of the service once you use it, that we're cutting "red tape" by merely asking you to sign and post the enclosed card. The signature is for our purchase identity records and automatically gives you all of our charge account privileges.

But however you prefer to purchase, please remember that we'll continue to make this the best all-round store you could possibly want—from comprehensive assortments to the many special courtesies we are only too glad to extend.

Sincerely,

## PROBLEMS IN CREDIT CORRESPONDENCE

1. Assume that as assistant to the credit man of B. F. Fox & Company, New Orleans, La., you received a letter from M. Bauer & Company, 89 McDonald Street, Montreal, Canada, asking for sixty days' credit on large quantity purchases of raw sugar which they wish to make in the immediate future, and naming several banks and other references.

Reports from the commercial agencies as well as from the references submitted by the applicant are of a nature to make it unwise for you to extend sixty days' credit at the present time. However, you think it good business to accept Bauer & Company's orders on the basis of thirty days' time with the privilege of five per cent discount for cash.



3. John St. Clair & Sons, wholesale dealers in men's clothing, 9 Deland Street, Pittsburgh, Pa., received a first order from Ray Delhauer, a retail clothier, 10 Woodman Avenue, Lebanon, Pa., approximately a week ago.

Reports from outside sources indicate that Mr. Delhauer has been in business but a short time, and while they are fairly satisfactory, St. Clair & Sons wish to obtain more detailed information concerning his business affairs. They therefore decide to write direct to the applicant for information and to ask him to fill out and return a signed property blank which they are enclosing.

As correspondent in the credit department of St. Clair & Sons, prepare the letter to be sent to the retailer.

4. John St. Clair & Sons, the firm mentioned in the foregoing problem, recently received an order for miscellaneous men's furnishings amounting to \$200 from Adolf Jarecki, 85 Peach Street, Rock Island, Illinois.

Their salesman reports that Mr. Jarecki, a former clerk in a large Rock Island clothing store, has just recently started in the retail men's furnishings business, having so invested his savings. He states that Adolf Jarecki is an alert, progressive, and promising young man of excellent reputation and good standing in the community. Information obtained from the prospective customer direct discloses the fact that while his reputation and his general standing are good, his capital is very limited. For this reason St. Clair & Sons would not be justified in extending him credit to the amount of his order at present.

You are now asked to write Adolf Jarecki, acknowledging receipt of information given by him and briefly commenting on it. Suggest that he cut down the size of the order to about half, and that he pay cash less two per cent discount. You would be glad to handle all his orders on this basis until such time as you could extend credit to him. Offer to supply him with advertising matter and to assist him otherwise in the sale of your goods.

5. As credit man of the Futurity Fence Company, 28 Anita Street, Ashland, Oregon, you receive an order amounting to \$115 from the Williston Hardware Store, Deshong, Oregon, a retail firm with a low financial rating.

Write this firm to the effect that you would be willing to ship the order with draft attached to bill of lading. End your letter with some strong selling talk about Futurity fencing.

6. Assume that you are employed as credit correspondent by the Abbott Wholesale Drug Company, Joplin, Missouri, which firm has on its books an order from the Van Pelt Drug Store, 43 Ventura Blvd., East Arapahoe, Wisconsin, for shipment in a month from date.

Recently private information reached you that the affairs of your customer were in a dangerous condition. You decided therefore to obtain an up-to-date, signed property statement from your customer before

shipping his order. Your records indicate that the Van Pelt Drug Store takes an annual inventory about the middle of January. It is now the beginning of February.

You wrote this retailer a courteous letter asking for a signed property statement and enclosed a blank for that purpose. To-day you get his answer. In effect, the customer flatly refuses to give you the information which you asked for, saying that he is under no obligation to you to make a statement of his personal and business affairs, and that he would rather cancel the order and place it elsewhere than to comply with your request.

You are now asked to write to this retailer. State frankly your reasons for wanting the property statement and for going direct to the customer for it. Mention the fact that from several different quarters his standing has been reported unsatisfactory. You would not under any circumstances feel justified in forwarding his order now on your books, and that he is at liberty to cancel it, if he so desires. Stand on your rights.

7. The Ohio Cycle Corporation, manufacturers of bicycles and motorcycles, Cleveland, Ohio, received a letter from Ernest Porter, Mt. Union, Ohio, asking if the firm would be willing to start him in the bicycle business by putting in a stock of goods for him. He states that there is a brisk demand for bicycles in his town, especially since Mt. Union College is a mile away from town and can be reached only on foot or by means of a private vehicle of some kind, as there is no street car line. He expects a good sale of bicycles among the college students.

Write Ernest Porter to the effect that your firm makes shipments only to merchants who have sufficient capital invested in their business to finance their purchases. You would be glad to handle his business on a cash basis. You might suggest his going into partnership with some one who would supply the necessary capital for the business.

8. As credit correspondent of the Findlay Electric Company, 58 Electric Building, Spokane, Washington, you receive to-day a check from the Cline Electric Company, Bremerton, Washington, for \$93.10, which is the amount of the invoice (\$95.00) less two per cent discount for payment within ten days from date of invoice. Reference to your records makes evident the fact that the discount period on this particular invoice expired three days ago.

Write a letter to the Cline Electric Company, calling attention to the oversight, returning the check, and asking for a remittance of the correct amount. This firm is an old customer of the house. State definitely why you cannot accept the check, and urge your customer to comply with your terms in the future.

9. George Trogler, 141 Cedar Street, Kalsner, Montana, a young man of business ability and character, has worked for a number of years as a clerk in a men's clothing store in his home town.

Having saved a sum of money, he now sees an opportunity to start a small store for himself. However, his capital is not sufficient to enable him to go into business and to carry it on without too much indebtedness. He has written to the Credit Manager of Berlin & Sons, wholesalers in men's clothing, San Francisco, California, asking him for personal advice and also whether or not his firm would be willing to extend him credit, should he decide to establish himself in business.

Your problem is to write a letter to George Trogler, advising him against his going into business at the present time, refusing credit, but at the same time keeping his good-will. Make your reply complete, supplying additional data as necessary.

10. Clarence Gilliland, 469 Plymouth Avenue, Provo, Utah, writes Berlin & Sons, the firm mentioned in the foregoing exercise, that he intends to start in the furnishing business and asks for advice as to how much stock to carry, etc.

Answer him. Before you can give him practical information and advice, you should know the approximate amount of his expenses, as the amount of stock to be carried is determined by expenses; the sales necessary are determined by expenses. Write Mr. Gilliland, assuring him of your willingness to help him in every way and asking him concerning the following matters: the amount of store rent; the amount of money to be withdrawn for his own needs; the amount of additional help to be engaged; the amount of incidental expenses, such as light, heat, and the like.

Upon receipt of this information, you will be able to give definite information concerning the amount of stock to be carried and the amount of capital necessary to carry the stock. Write the letter.

## CHAPTER XII

### COLLECTIONS

The old saying: "A dollar kept movin' pays many a debt and short credits make long friends" is true even to-day. A healthy credit policy consistently enforced will soon cut down the number of a firm's delinquent debtors to a normal minimum. This is desirable not only to the firm but to its prompt-paying customers as well.

The collection correspondent has no "snap." Often it is far more difficult to write money-producing collection letters than to write order-producing sales letters. In the latter case a person is asked to pay out his money for the purchase of goods, the enjoyment of some pleasure or benefit however intangible, while in the former case he is asked to surrender his reluctant dollars for goods or services the satisfaction of which may be only a dim memory now. It is much like asking a man to pay for the admission to a show long after he has witnessed and enjoyed it. It is hard because the incentive to pay is gone—the psychological moment is forever past. Paying for something used up and enjoyed long ago is, moreover, to many a person, a somewhat one-sided transaction.

#### *Object of Collection Letter*

Two prime purposes should be bosomed together inseparably in every collection letter:

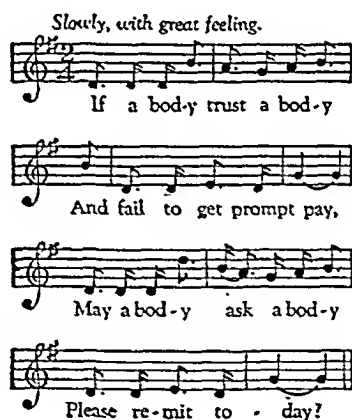
- To secure payment of the debt as quickly as possible
- To accomplish this without offense to the customer.

The debtor is asked merely to meet his just obligations—financial responsibilities which, it is assumed, he intended fully to discharge at the time he purchased the goods. He is given to understand that compliance with the terms of the sale is expected of him, as it is of every honest debtor, as a matter of course. And while every tactful effort is put forth to retain his good-will for the firm, yet his case is handled in a manner definite and firm, designed to bring him into line with little or no delay, and then to keep him in line. Adaptation to the reader's circumstances, temperament, and view-point in a collection letter is highly desirable. If he who en-

deavors to collect debts by letter could after a cordial, hearty handshake make his appeal face to face in a personal interview, he would in not a few instances get the money without very much ado. As matters stand, he must throw his personality into his written message for a clear, strong, and understanding man-to-man appeal for the money.

### *Effect an Understanding*

In his desire to get a quick financial settlement from the customer the wise collector always seeks to reach an understanding first. He knows that failure to pay a bill at the proper time is often due to carelessness or forgetfulness. So at first he sends courteous, entirely impersonal reminders—mimeographed or printed forms that focus attention on the oversight in few sentences which in every successive effort take on a stronger and more insistent tone. A dealer in musical instruments rubber stamps overdue bills in this fashion:



This impersonal and rather humorous reminder is effective in its way.

When formal notifications have proved fruitless, when it is plain that mere irregularity or neglect is not at the bottom of the delinquency, when prolonged, serious delay justifies a personal appeal for the money, then the collector seeks full and definite knowledge of the conditions that may cause the customer to be so unbusinesslike and so neglectful in his dealings. He knows his debtor has a *reason* for delaying payment—it may be dissatisfaction with the last order of goods shipped, or financial difficulties, or an error in the amount of the bill. Be the trouble what it may, it must be found, discussed, and the way paved for payment and for a resumption of business relations mutually profitable. To lose patience and self-control and to allow an intimation of unworthy feelings to show

exactly fits the case it is intended to put in order. Only if he knows his debtors and their affairs as he should, and suits his letters to them, can he hope to attain a fair measure of success.

The two leading elements on which the collection follow-up is based are repetition and variety. More or less frequent reiteration of the same demand for money at regular intervals produces a valuable cumulative effect that would be lost entirely were the debtor to receive several or all notices of payment at the same time. Mere mechanical repetition of the same demand, however, is not effective—it must be expressed in an appealing and interesting way. In other words, there should be a pleasing variety in the use of written appeals for money. Too many business firms content themselves with sending the same stereotyped collection letters year after year and wonder why the percentage of delinquent accounts on their books remains substantially the same.

The physical as well as the “mental” make-up of the various collection units should be varied. Variety provides the unexpected. It often intrigues the debtor into giving attention to the creditor’s message—prompts him to read it. Different kinds of letterheads, envelopes, and enclosures may be used. The particular form of the letter on the page, its length, and that of its paragraphs should be varied to suit the debtor and the nature of the delinquency. No matter whether the language and tone of the collection appeal in general are conservative, up-to-date, or “stuntlike,” the suggestion to vary the physical appearance of the individual units of the collection system is always applicable.

Variety in the message of the collection letter is provided by the use of different appeals—reasons why the debtor should pay promptly. It is also advisable to change the tone and the point of view of the message occasionally. Thus, in a series of letters written from the conventional “We wish to call your attention to your unpaid balance” point of view, a letter written from a strongly personal “I” standpoint would stand out as an attention-getter. A personally dictated letter signed by some executive, such as the treasurer or the vice-president and expressed in a truly personal tone, will frequently rouse stubborn debtors to action.

Among the important factors on which the time intervals between the various units of a collection system depend are:

the kind of debtors: men or women; business or professional men; consumers or dealers; “good pay” or “poor pay”

the amount of the debt and the length of time it has been due

the distance at which the debtor lives from the creditor

the number and the kind of requests for payment already made.

Most collection systems are planned to reach a finale. Each successive appeal for money brings more pressure to bear on the debtor. The shorter the intervals between the various collection units, the stronger the accumulated pressure. Furthermore, shorter intervals reduce the total operating time of the entire collection system. They suggest that the creditor means business. But if they are not properly applied, they may give offense. Ordinarily, the poorer the quality of the delinquency, the more rapidly should the system operate because of the increased risk of loss, and vice versa. Most retailers consider a week a short interval and a month a long interval. Ten- and fifteen-day intervals are common. An exceptionally good customer may be given a month, even more. As the delinquency gets older and more serious, the intervals between the units of the collection system are lessened, finally giving the debtor only a day or two—just enough time within which to reply promptly.

year, and, worse than that, frequently on the same accounts. Another reason is their dull conventionality. Just as soon as a business firm despatches collection letters neatly dressed, carefully adapted, and ingeniously worded, the money from delinquent accounts flows in faster.

Since it is the purpose of *every* collection letter to suggest and to hasten favorable action, its first and last paragraphs should be especially forceful. Among opening paragraphs of successful collection letters were found to be these:

This letter is written to ask your co-operation in an important matter which concerns us both.

---

Please place yourself in our position for a moment.

---

Is anything wrong with the attached bill of your account?

---

On my desk is a request for a special investigation of your credit record.

---

Before filling your order received to-day, we thought it best to write you about your account.

---

The fact that we are willing to trust you for thirty days proves that we have confidence in you.

---

For your own sake, it will pay you to read this letter through.

---

The closing paragraph of a collection letter should be short and pithy, urging immediate and favorable response:

Now, please—while you think of it.

---

We shall expect your check for \$55 by April 15.

---

An immediate remittance from you in the enclosed envelope would convince us that you do believe in the square deal.

---

No need to write a letter. Just mail your check in the stamped envelope enclosed for your convenience.

---

Please send us a check by Saturday of this week.

---

May we have your remittance now while the matter is fresh in your mind? Use the stamped envelope enclosed now—please.



and enlisted his sympathy effectively. In collecting many small accounts from retailers, a wholesaler obtained gratifying results by writing as follows:

Dear Sir:

"Many hands make light work."  
Think of one man  
Having to pay  
\$10,000 cash.

Looks hard—doesn't it?

Then think of  
500 men each paying \$20—  
Small amount each—looks easy.  
IS easy.  
We have to raise  
\$10,000 within a week.  
Need help—

Won't you please  
Look up our statement?  
And "lend a helping hand"?  
Thank you.

Yours very truly,

*The appeal to self-interest* urges prompt payment on the ground that it will result in some direct personal advantage to the debtor—the continued maintenance of good service, attractive prices, and the many privileges to which a charge customer is entitled. Retailers, especially department stores, find this particular appeal very useful. Thus, a letter stressing the debtor's buying advantages in learning of bargain sales through advance notices mailed only to charge customers proved to be an effective appeal to self-interest. The following letter illustrates this appeal:

Dear Madam:

Our ability to offer you high-grade merchandise and service at reasonable prices depends largely on the extent to which we can reduce our operating expenses. One of our largest expense items is the carrying of overdue book balances, which in the aggregate frequently amount to a large sum.

You can aid us materially in maintaining the quality of merchandise and service to which you are accustomed at this store by remitting the amount due on your account now.

Very truly yours,

*The appeal to fair play* is perhaps the most widely used, especially to business men. It seeks to stir the debtor to action by stressing his own belief in the square deal in business. The core thought of this appeal is the golden rule of treating others as you would have them treat you under similar conditions. The debtor should be as prompt in meeting his due bills as the creditor is in delivering satisfactory merchandise and service. It would be presumptuous for the creditor to use the appeal to fairness if he is not fair and square with his own customers. The following excerpts from letters will serve to indicate various forms of the appeal to fair play:

Please give us the consideration that you would naturally expect in the event our positions were reversed.

---

In all fairness, we want to ask whether you think you are doing the square thing by withholding payment of this small amount for sixty days.

---

Since we entered your order on our books in good faith and shipped you the goods promptly in accordance with your instructions, it is only fair that you accord us similar treatment in return.

*The appeal to pride* emphasizes the importance of a good credit rating and of a good business standing. Its direct personal effect impresses the responsible business man strongly because he is sensitive in such matters. The debtor who is habitually slow in meeting his obligations and whose business methods are sloppy, who, in other words, has little pride in his financial and business reputation, is seldom reached by means of this appeal. The following letter illustrates the appeal to pride, which, owing to the seriousness of the delinquency, is combined with an appeal to fear:

Dear Sir:

Neglect of any bill is a serious matter in present-day business. Your neglect of your account for \$        calls for a hint that I think you'll undoubtedly appreciate.

You must know that the Manufacturers and Jobbers of the country have effected an organization for mutual protection, through which the standing and rating of their customers are given. When a man refuses to pay a just claim HIS NAME IS PASSED AROUND among the members of the Association. You must know that.

This puts us in a very embarrassing position regarding your delinquency. We know that a REPORT to this Association is a step you would take EVERY PRECAUTION TO AVOID—as such a humiliating record would be intolerable to a man of your recognized standing.

Yet our obligation to this Association forces this report from us as soon as an account reaches a certain age on our books. We have no choice whatever, much as we would prefer it to be otherwise in your particular case. Now the time has come when we must make this REPORT in the event of any delay on your part after\_\_\_\_\_.

A reasonable payment, should you find it impossible to pay the whole bill, will relieve both you and us.

Do not fail to realize that a very prompt reply is necessary. Write us AT ONCE telling just what you are prepared to do.

Yours very truly,

To make sure this is brought to your personal attention I take the trouble to send this letter by REGISTERED MAIL—and I look for your reply AT ONCE.

*The appeal to fear*, resorted to last in collecting past-due accounts, is always negative and more or less destructive of good-will. It consists of mild or severe, vague or specific threats. Since the use of a severe threat is usually followed by the loss of the debtor's good-will, it should not be employed in the case of a customer whose account the creditor would keep. Firms dealing with the better class of women seldom use severe threats, preferring less offensive collection schemes. Specific threats are most effective with debtors that know modern collection methods; vague threats are likely to bring results from debtors not accustomed to the usual collection routine of business. The following examples will serve to show the different kinds of threats ordinarily used:

*Mild threat:* It is to your interest to give this past-due account your attention now, as it will be referred to our credit manager again one week from to-day.

*Severe threat:* Surely you would not like to have judgment and costs rendered against you; therefore, in fairness to both of us, we give you this last opportunity to settle this indebtedness.

*Vague threat:* Unless we receive your remittance within ten days from to-day, March 1, we will resort to other measures for our protection.

*Specific threat:* If your account is not paid by next Monday, April 21, we will place it with our attorney for collection and will notify other mercantile agencies of your delinquency.

A *special appeal* sometimes used is that *to humor*. Oftentimes the collection letter which can produce a smile on the debtor's face can produce also a remittance. To be effective, humorous collection letters must be carefully suited to the type of debtor and to his particular mood. Thus, in collecting money from professional men and women, it is best to write in a serious tone. Stores dealing with women see a distinct loss of business dignity in any letter that attempts to be funny. In writing to business men, however, especially in the early stages of a minor delinquency, an original appeal to the sense of humor is likely to bring very favorable returns. Of course, the humor should be in the story, not in the writer's attitude toward the reader and his tardiness. Since many humorous collection letters are nothing but clever stunts, many firms will refrain from using them on the ground that such artful expedients have no place in the serious business of collecting debts. Some time ago a firm in Wyoming selling cowboy paraphernalia pictured in its letter-heading a rider throwing a lasso within the loop of which appeared the inside address of the reader. The letter which followed, written in the cowboy vernacular, began with the single word "Roped!" It prompted many stubborn debtors to settle their accounts. Observe the humorous appeal in the following successful collection follow-up:

I

Dear Subscriber:

"Sure! Me know you velly vell—No checkee.  
No shoitee!"

A smile and those few words of quasi-English were the stock in trade of a Chinese laundryman in my boyhood town. One could be sure of getting his laundry—if one hadn't misplaced his check!

It's not such a far cry from a laundry check to a bank check—nor, for that matter, from a shirt to CURRENT EVENTS. All four items are indispensable to those accustomed to using them.

Won't you send us your check—your bank check—for \$10 so that we may balance your now overdue

account? I shall appreciate greatly your co-operation in mailing the check to-day.

Yours very truly,

If this letter has crossed your remittance in the mails, please be assured that your account will be properly credited.

2

Dear Subscriber:

If you and I talked together for an hour, we would undoubtedly disagree on many things.

Maybe you don't believe in God; maybe I do. Perhaps you like spinach; I don't. Your favorite actor, author, song, summer resort, sport, joke, poem, fruit, pie, car, probably isn't mine.

There is just one thing I know we would agree on! A man (or woman) should pay his (her) just debts.

How do I know this? Because you're an American, and, while there have been some Americans who haven't paid their just debts, I never heard of one who didn't believe he (she) should.

Herewith is a bill for the issues of CURRENT EVENTS we have sent you. If you deny it is a just debt, please be kind enough to tell me why. If you don't deny it, it is a just debt, please pay it promptly.

Right?

Yours very truly,

3

Dear Subscriber:

I am sure you have all along intended to send us the \$10 you contracted to pay for the copies of CURRENT EVENTS we have sent you during the past few months. Perhaps you have entirely overlooked it, but we can't—our books simply won't balance without the \$10.

If by chance there is the slightest doubt in your mind about this small debt, we shall be only too glad to send you the order you signed—it is right here on my desk.

Perhaps you believe you sent us your check. That is quickly decided by glancing at your stubs. If you are right and find that you did send it to us, it is obvious that we credited it to the wrong account, and if you will simply let us know the

date it was mailed or, better, the date of our bank's endorsement on the back of the canceled check, it will help us to credit your account properly and to put our bookkeeper in his place.

There is enclosed a bill, a convenient form, and a return envelope which needs no stamp. We pay the postage here. Your early reply will be most appreciated.

Sincerely yours,

4

Dear Subscriber:

Our auditor tells me that he has had no better luck than I had in collecting the \$10.00 you owe us for your subscription to CURRENT EVENTS.

This is simply to notify you that we will discontinue sending the magazine to you with the next issue unless, of course, we receive your check before then.

Mailed to-day, your check will prevent a break in the receipt of your copies.

Note: On a slip of paper attached to the letter appears the following:

Away from home\_\_\_\_\_

Thought it paid\_\_\_\_\_

\*It is paid\_\_\_\_\_

Changed address\_\_\_\_\_

Bills not received\_\_\_\_\_

Illness\_\_\_\_\_

Bills overlooked\_\_\_\_\_

Pure cussedness\_\_\_\_\_

\*If you have paid this account, will you kindly let us have the following data:

Paid by (check) (M.O.) (Cash)

Amount of remittance \$\_\_\_\_\_ Date sent \_\_\_\_\_

Date of endorsement on back of canceled check  
\_\_\_\_\_

Note: All letters are signed by the circulation manager with the exception of the third, which is signed by the auditor.

In collecting money from retail customers, who are often not versed in business and especially not in collection methods, everything which might give the reader the impression that the merchant has singled him out should be avoided. It will be found that business men in general confine their preliminary collection efforts to impersonal, printed or mimeographed, notifications, mere forms that make no pretense of being personal appeals for the money. Often nothing but a statement of the account rubber stamped, "PAST DUE. PLEASE REMIT" is sent. Or forms, such as the ones given below, are made use of.

# I

*First  
printed  
form:*

This statement shows that part of your ledger account which is due and unpaid. Please notify us of any errors or omissions.

*(ten days later)*

*Second  
printed  
form:*

Your attention is called to items on this statement which are past due. Please remit.

(ten days later)

*Third  
printed  
form:*

We have twice called your attention to unpaid items on your account which are overdue. Not having had a reply, we request that you give this third notice immediate attention.

## II

Now let us follow the application of the principles of collection letter writing fitted to a string of six letters. Their purpose is to bring in the money from individual persons who ordered a correspondence course on a ten-day free examination plan, promising either to return it within this time or to pay for it in full. Each unit, it is clear, should be complete in itself—awaken a desire to pay and promote action to this end.

### Letter 1

(Sent two weeks after rendition of the statement of account, and three weeks after rendition of the bill of account.)

Dear Sir:

You probably will be interested to know that the first edition of our Salesmanship Course is being rapidly depleted by the shipment of hundreds of sets every day.

Since placing the course on the market, it has met with the most gratifying success, as attested by the hearty and enthusiastic endorsements of those who have studied and applied its principles.

From present indications, we can safely predict there will be thousands of people in the United States who will acquire the knowledge contained in this course within the next six months, and who will have greatly increased their earning capacity by its study and application.

As we have not heard from you to the contrary, we assume that you, too, have decided to avail yourself of this wonderful opportunity to increase your earning power at a small cost.

We have not as yet received your remittance for the course, a bill for which was sent you two weeks ago. The bill was subject to cancellation by you within ten days after receiving the Course, according to the terms of our contract.

As you have kept the course longer than ten days, you evidently want to pay for it, but have



not yet sent your check or postal money-order for the amount.

We are sending out thousands of courses in the various departments daily. You can realize the inconvenience and expense caused us by withholding payment. Just fold your check or money-order with the enclosed statement and mail it back in the accompanying envelope. It will be greatly appreciated.

Yours very truly,

This is a good example of when and how to inject *salesmanship* into a collection letter. The examination period is over. There is a slight possibility that the purchaser may have lost enthusiasm for the course and may wish to return it now that he has been asked to pay. To forestall such unfavorable action the seller devotes almost his entire first collection effort toward renewing the purchaser's interest in the course and toward stimulating a desire to pay for it by marshalling before his eyes in the first four paragraphs some of its predominant selling qualities. The remaining part of the message briefly reminds the reader of his agreement and spurs him on to action.

To sum up, the purpose of this letter is to resell the customer: to induce him to keep the course and to pay for it promptly.

#### Letter 2

(Sent out ten days or two weeks after Letter 1)

Dear Sir:

A short time ago we received your order for the Master Course in Salesmanship. Upon receipt of your request, we promptly forwarded the complete course. As we have not heard from you to the contrary, we shall assume that it has arrived and that you have had the ten days allowed for free examination. Evidently you have found it very valuable and worth many times the price we are asking.

A bill for the course, which you ordered, was sent some time ago. This bill was subject to cancellation by you within ten days after receipt of the course. As you have kept the course longer than ten days, you evidently want to pay for it, but have not yet sent your check or postal money-order for the amount due us.

We are sending out thousands of these courses every week and as a result our business necessitates a great number of small accounts. These in the aggregate amount to quite a sum. You can

Another courteous appeal to the customer's sense of fairness. Additional reasons why he should remit promptly are given. The suggestion that his failure to pay "is certainly an oversight" is to make the debtor realize his neglect. The letter ends with a positive urge to immediate action.

#### Letter 4

(Sent out after another ten days or two weeks.)

Dear Sir:

Your account of \$10 for the Master Course in Salesmanship stands open on our books. As we have not received a reply from you, we are at a loss to know just what the trouble is.

We forwarded the complete course of ten lessons upon receipt of your request and shall take it for granted that it arrived promptly. About ten days later we sent you a bill for \$10 and two weeks later mailed a statement for the amount due us.

Subsequently we wrote you three letters, but up to date have received no word of explanation from you.

It is our earnest desire to close all outstanding accounts as soon as possible. Our agreement allowed you ten days in which to examine the course after which a remittance should have been made or the course promptly returned.

As far as we know we have lived up to our part of the contract and shall appreciate it if you will advise us wherein we have failed to do so. As this account is long overdue, you will greatly oblige us by a prompt remittance, or letter explaining just why the account has not been paid.

In remitting kindly use the enclosed REMITTANCE SLIP properly filled out and attach it to your check or money-order.

We are enclosing a self-addressed envelope for your convenience. A prompt reply will be appreciated.

Yours very truly,

Firmness of tone distinguishes this member of the follow-up from its predecessors. The one addressed is given to understand indirectly that the firm has fulfilled its part of the agreement, but that he has not. He is again reminded of his contract and is given an opportunity to explain his side of the case.

## Letter 5

(Sent out after another ten days or two weeks.)

Dear Sir:

Please give this letter more attention than you evidently have given to our other four letters. We are sorry we cannot talk face to face—because this will probably be the last time we shall write you.

Is there any definite reason for your not sending the \$10 which you owe us for the Master Course in Salesmanship?

If there is—will you please tell us at once what it is? We sent the Master Course in Salesmanship to you on consignment—at your request. You agreed to return the Course within ten days or pay \$10. Surely you did not intend to use the mails to secure something without paying for it. We played fair—and sent the Course without one cent payment on your part, as we were quite sure you would want to keep it after you had examined it and found what a bargain you were getting.

We did what you asked us to do, and we feel sure you do not wish to withhold the \$10 any longer and cause us more expense than you have already caused.

NO—YOU WILL KEEP YOUR WORD and will send us \$10. We believe that you would not have put your signature to an agreement which you had no intention of carrying out. HOWEVER, THIS IS OUR FIFTH LETTER AND YOU MUST MAKE SOME EXPLANATION IF YOU DO NOT PAY THE SMALL AMOUNT RIGHT NOW.

Enclosed is an envelope in which we expect to receive your remittance of \$10 or a good reason why it is not enclosed.

Yours very truly,

In Letter 5 the collector appeals to both the debtor's sense of justice and his sense of honesty. This he does in a most positive and firm way: **YOU WILL KEEP YOUR WORD—YOU MUST MAKE SOME EXPLANATION IF YOU DO NOT PAY THE SMALL AMOUNT RIGHT NOW.** There is added pressure in the ending: **We expect to receive your remittance or a good reason why it is not enclosed,** which becomes especially apparent when one compares this closing with that of Letter 4.

## Letter 6

(Sent out after another ten days or two weeks.)

Dear Sir:

Just a final heart-to-heart talk and a few fair questions:

1. Did you order the Master Course in Salesmanship from us several months ago on signed agreement to remit \$10 for the course or return it within ten days?

2. Do you OWE us the \$10 or do you NOT owe it?

3. Have you PAID the bill?—if so, when and how?

4. Do you INTEND to pay the bill?

5. Do you think YOU ought to make good YOUR agreement?

6. Did WE fail in any way to make good OUR part of the contract?

7. Have YOU made good YOUR part?

8. Do you INTEND to make good?

9. WHEN will you do it?

10. Have you decided to REFUSE to pay the bill?

11. Do you think that a court of appeals (either through law or the Post Office Department) would uphold US in our claim—or would it say YOU had a right to obtain the course and not pay for it?

12. In ignoring our many requests for settlement of account, does your sense of SQUARENESS tell you that YOU are doing right?

We do not want you to pay anything that you do not owe. As far as our records show, this amount is due us. However, before placing your account in the hands of the Universal Fidelity and Guaranty Company, we desire to give you this opportunity of adjusting this small account.

Here is an envelope for your remittance or reply.

Yours very truly,

The last member of the series! Its opening: "Just a *final heart-to-heart talk* and a few *fair* questions" is fitting and attention-compelling. By means of a series of pointed questions which should stir the reader's sense

of justice, of pride, and of honesty, a last attempt is made to bring the delinquent debtor to terms. His sense of fear is played upon in question eleven which threatens legal action.

### III

This series of five units is employed by a department store to follow up woman patrons whose charge accounts are past due. In tone these brief messages, which are neatly typewritten on note-size paper, are tactful; in spirit they are kindly. Nowhere in the entire follow-up is the reader given the impression that she is being dunned or that the store is not desirous of retaining her patronage. Even the concluding message, the threat that the account will be referred to the credit department for FINAL disposition, is without a sting. The entire series is well suited to the character and view-point of the debtors—women who in most cases are not used to methods of collection and who are often forgetful, if not neglectful, of their business obligations, which to them are often relatively unimportant.

#### Letter 1

## Letter 3

Dear Madam:

You possibly have overlooked our letter calling attention to the past-due conditions of your account. We have been content to let you almost suit your own convenience in paying your account but now ask that the matter receive immediate and favorable consideration.

Give the account your early attention, please.

Yours very truly,

## Letter 4

Dear Madam:

You have received several courteous requests from us asking for payment of your past-due account, but we have heard nothing from you in response. You would not like to write letters and not have a reply; neither do we.

Please give this matter your attention in the next few days without fail as it will again come before our Credit Department one week from to-day.

Yours very truly,

## Letter 5

Dear Madam:

We are at a loss to understand your continued failure either to pay your long past-due account, or to call on us about it. We have been patient, realizing that unusual conditions sometimes prevent one doing all one desires. We wish to do all we possibly can for any of our good customers—and we have always regarded you as such—but at the same time your indebtedness must not be neglected any longer.

The account will come before our Credit Department for FINAL disposition one week from to-day. We trust you will have remitted before that time.

Yours very truly,

## IV

In decided contrast with the two foregoing sets of letters is the installment collection follow-up given below. It is intended for individual business men—debtors who, familiar with collection methods, themselves realize the

value of a prompt remittance. The approach in these letters is made in straightforward, man-to-man fashion. Sympathy, fairness, justice, and fear are appealed to in their turn. Again and again is the reader's attention focused on previous reminders: "We trust you will cheerfully comply with this, our SECOND REQUEST"—"You realize, now that I have called your attention to it the THIRD TIME"—"This is the FOURTH TIME we have written to you about your past due payment. . . ." Though a whole in itself, each of these units is a fitting one-sixth of the series.

### Letter 1

(Time between letters ten days.)

Dear Sir:

The check you intended to send us for this month's payment, as noted below, has not yet arrived—no doubt forgotten.

Not a serious oversight, of course, but for the sake of uniformity in handling thousands of these small accounts, PROMPTNESS in remitting is GREATLY appreciated.

Don't bother to write a letter—we understand perfectly how such oversights occur—just pin your check or currency to this letter, and mail it back to us.

An addressed envelope is enclosed for your convenience.

Thank you!

these books were sold were figured so closely as to leave no margin for such collection expense.

Therefore, we ask you to make a memorandum on your desk calendar of the other payments in order that they may not slip your mind in the press of more important business and to send us IMMEDIATELY the amount past due.

We trust you will cheerfully comply with this, our SECOND REQUEST, and then we shall not have to trouble you again with reminders.

Yours very truly,

Now due \$————

Letter 3

Dear Sir:

Mine is a perplexing job!

The editor says, "Don't offend a single business man if you can help it." The sales manager says, "Every man who would want our publications will pay promptly enough if you let him alone." The president says, "Our work is to HELP business men and to counsel them, and you want to handle your collections differently from the usual way of dunning the customers of an ordinary business."

But the fact remains—we are just like every other business house—like YOU; we deliver value and we want money for it. In your case we accepted your order in good faith and entered it upon our books. We promptly sent you the books in accordance with your order, charges prepaid.

So without frills or fancies, I ask you plainly to please send the correct amount to balance your account to date; in all \$————.

You realize, now that I have called your attention to it the THIRD TIME, that you have been letting this account drift along simply because it has seemed too small to bother with. But now that I have spoken to you plainly, I feel sure that your sense of fairness will prompt you to send your remittance IMMEDIATELY and so make it unnecessary for us to go to further expense in collecting this little bill.

Yours very truly,



## Letter 4

Dear Sir:

Are we not at least entitled to the business courtesy of a reply to our letters regarding your accounts?

This is the FOURTH TIME we have written to you about the past-due payments and so far you have utterly ignored our letters. As every possible courtesy has been extended to you, we are at a loss to understand why you have not only permitted your account to get in arrears, but have even failed to reply to our several requests for payment in accordance with the terms of your contract.

In this contract which you signed, and which is legally and morally binding, you agreed to comply with the terms herein specifically mentioned and which in part call for regular monthly payments.

You owe \$\_\_\_\_\_ at this time to cover the installments which are past due.

As a business man you surely realize that we cannot permit the present delinquent condition of your account to continue; and unless we hear from you at once, we shall, with reluctance, be compelled to take other steps for our protection.

Yours very truly,

## Letter 5

Dear Sir:

Are you going to compel us to adopt legal measures to collect our little account? I certainly hope not.

My personal attention has been called to your continued delinquency and your utter disregard of all communications addressed to you on the subject, and, candidly, I am surprised at your attitude.

When we accepted your order we believed you to be thoroughly responsible. Our part of the agreement entered into with you has been faithfully performed, and it is only right that you show the same regard for your obligation as we did for ours.

We have given you every opportunity to accord us reasonable and fair treatment and as you do not appear to be so disposed, we believe that we should be justified in placing the account with our attorneys, although we heartily dislike the idea of bringing upon you the undesirable publicity and cost of a lawsuit.

Neither the person who is well-to-do nor the individual less fortunate financially, can afford to have a judgment and costs rendered against him; consequently in justice to yourself as well as to us, it behooves you to settle your account immediately.

Yours very truly,

Note. This letter is signed by the Collection Manager.

#### Letter 6

Dear Sir:

This is to inform you that if you do not adjust your account within 10 days, or make some arrangement for the settlement of it, we shall, with regret, be compelled to place the matter in the hands of our attorneys without further notice to you.

Your balance is \$\_\_\_\_\_.

Yours very truly,

### *Collecting Installment Accounts*

Since many retail sales are made on the installment plan, it becomes necessary to write letters collecting past-due payments. Perhaps the chief characteristic of the installment plan is that many small payments are to be made at short intervals. The danger is that several delinquencies will pile up, thus disrupting entirely the routine of payments agreed on by buyer and seller. Retailers dealing with clerks, laborers, and other persons with small and often uncertain incomes get in touch with the debtor within twenty-four or forty-eight hours after he has missed an installment with a view to getting him back into the habit of paying regularly. Other firms will wait several days before starting the collection routine, some going so far as to disregard non-payment of one installment, provided the succeeding ones are met promptly. Some installment contracts include interest charges on all delinquent payments. If these exceed a certain number, the entire amount due under the agreement becomes payable at once. The burden of meeting payments promptly under such contracts rests entirely with the customer who receives no so-called collection notices or letters whatsoever. Most retailers selling on the installment plan, however, make it a point to cultivate consumer good-will by aiding delinquents as much as possible in reestablishing regular payment routine.

The following letters are taken from a collection follow-up used by a large city clothing store that sells mostly to persons with small incomes.

Most of the store's sales are based on the installment plan. The letters are all form letters. No attempt is made to "personalize" them. They are sent to men and women alike.

## Letter 1

Dear Sir:

In the enclosed envelope please mail your check or money order for the balance due on your account, shown below.

A small balance of this nature requires just as much attention from our credit department as would a large one.

We trust you appreciate our position and realize that prompt payment of this bill will preserve your credit standing.

Please send us your remittance promptly.

Very truly yours,

Balance \$\_\_\_\_\_

2

Dear Sir:

Your promise to make payment: \_\_\_\_\_

Now overdue \$\_\_\_\_\_

At the time you promised to make payment on the date given above, your account was brought to my attention, and I made a note of it.

To-day I find that the payment promised has not been received and your account has fallen further in arrears.

Perhaps you have overlooked the matter, or it may be that payment is in the mails. However, I shall hold this matter over another two days and expect you to call or to mail the full amount due to date in the envelope enclosed with this letter.

Very truly yours,

3

Dear Sir:

We expected to hear from you before this with a payment on your account, as requested in our previous letters.

Please understand that we cannot allow this account to go on week after week without a pay-

ment, and in view of the fact that you are not inconvenienced by lack of employment, we see no reason why you cannot continue with your payments.

If you are unable to meet the present terms of your contract, we are willing to make a temporary adjustment if necessary; but we must insist that you make a payment at once.

We expect your immediate attention to this matter, and if you cannot call in person, use the enclosed envelope for your remittance.

Yours very truly,

Balance \$\_\_\_\_\_

In arrears \$\_\_\_\_\_

4

Dear Sir:

Several days ago we called your attention to the payments that are overdue on your account.

Perhaps you do not fully understand the matter of payments. We arranged, at your suggestion, that this account be payable at certain definite dates, and it is very important that your payments reach this office promptly on the day they fall due.

If for any reason you are unable to make payment, please write us at once or telephone us so that further letters will be unnecessary. Otherwise, we ask that you call and make payment of the amount due to date upon receipt of this letter.

If you are unable to make payment in person, send your money by mail—it's perfectly safe—and your doing so will prevent your account from becoming more delinquent.

An addressed envelope is enclosed for your convenience, and payment of the full amount in arrears, shown below, is expected by return mail.

Very truly yours,

Balance \$\_\_\_\_\_

In arrears \$\_\_\_\_\_

5

Dear Sir:

You have no idea how unpleasant it is for us to have to write certain customers continually about delinquent payments. Good business methods,

7

Dear Sir:

Do you realize that by neglecting your account with us, you are impairing your credit standing among the merchants of this city?

Our association with the local Credit Bureau makes it necessary that we report the name of every customer who has defaulted or neglected his account. Then he becomes unworthy of further credit privileges by any merchant belonging to the association.

You never know when you may need credit again. How embarrassing and unfortunate it would be if you were refused this privilege by some other merchant because of an unsatisfactory report of a former credit account, received through the Credit Bureau!

We have been very lenient with you. If you have some good reason why you cannot meet the provisions of your contract, come to our office and let us have your side of the story. We wish to adjust the matter on a basis that will be in accord with your circumstances.

Please come to our office without delay. We will withhold our report to the Credit Bureau until then.

Very truly yours,

8

Dear Sir:

**YOUR OBLIGATION TO US MUST BE PAID!**

You cannot sidestep or avoid settlement of the balance due on your account. Sooner or later it must be paid. If you put it off, you are harming only yourself, for each day's delay makes you more negligent. **THE LONGER YOU PUT OFF PAYMENT OF A BILL, THE HARDER IT IS TO PAY!**

We shall never stop in our efforts to enforce collection. We are constantly on the alert. Our force of investigators is working day and night, year in and year out, to protect us in collection matters. Eventually, when you are found working, action will be taken through your employer to collect, in full, the amount you owe on your account, plus all the additional expense that will have accrued through our efforts in having to force collection. Then it will be useless for you to complain that we did not give you a fair chance. Remember that "He who is silent when he ought to have

spoken, shall not be heard to speak when he ought to be silent."

Take advantage of this opportunity. Settle this matter now. Begin now by sending us a substantial payment in the enclosed envelope. Prove to us that you do not mean to evade payment, and we will reinstate your contract among current accounts. Moreover, we will assist you in re-establishing your credit standing—without which you can never hope to obtain credit again in this city.

Yours very truly,

Delinquent balance \$\_\_\_\_\_

### *"Stunt" Letters*

Before resorting to more drastic measures in the collection of debts, some firms use a so-called stunt letter. It differs so much in appearance or appeal, or both, from the routine collection letter as to be regarded as unbusinesslike by firms that endeavor to cultivate a certain dignity in their dealings with the public. In other words, the usefulness of the "clownish" collection letter is greatly limited.

It would be very unwise to resort to stunts in collecting debts from women and other debtors whose greater or lesser unfamiliarity with business—especially collection methods, would very likely prompt them to regard the eccentric appeal for money as so much childish horseplay, if not as a personal insult. However, business men in general, realizing the creditor's difficulty in moving a very stubborn debtor to favorable action, frequently react favorably toward the "stunt" letter, provided it reaches them at the right time.

The advantage of the "stunt" letter lies in the singularity of its dress or message, or both. It must have the element of surprise so as to rouse a debtor who has remained silent for months sufficiently to prompt him to make payment or at least reply. It must catch the delinquent customer off guard.

To produce the desired effect, "stunt" letters are usually sent only after the regular collection series has failed to elicit any response whatsoever. However, this rule, like most others, is subject to exception. A case in point is the letter sent by a manufacturer to *all* his delinquent accounts. It was timed to arrive on St. Patrick's Day. Pinned to each message, which was typed in dark-green ink on light-green paper and enclosed in a green envelope bearing green postage stamps, was a sprig of real shamrock. The letter read:

Dear Mither McCulloch:

A fair colleen from the Ould Sod sent us this bit of shamrock, assuring us that it would bring good luck.

Shure, we're passing of it along to you in the fond hope that it will work its charm and bring back a letter and a check for \$15.40.

Yours thruly,

Ordinarily but one "stunt" letter is used in a collection series. Moreover, it is applied only to reasonably small debts, there being danger in making light of large balances owing for long periods of time. To re-emphasize, the "stunt" letter should be sent only to persons likely to appreciate its unique appeal. In all cases in which there is the slightest chance of its being misunderstood, the use of a stunt should be scrupulously avoided. There have been numerous instances in which the despatch of such an appeal for money resulted in the loss of profitable accounts, which no amount of skilful explanation was afterwards able to regain.

Some creditors resort to the practice of submitting statements of account showing amounts larger than those actually owed, but the majority of responsible business firms frown on such practice as indicating questionable commercial ethics.

## ILLUSTRATIONS

Retailers of various kinds responded favorably to the following individually typed "stunt" letter sent by a manufacturer:

Dear Mr. Fagan:

If a mouse ate your GRAIN  
you'd CATCH HIM!

If a man took your WATCH  
you'd THRASH HIM ! !

If a clerk stole your CASH  
you'd JAIL HIM ! ! !

But say,—what would you do to a fellow who'd  
ruin your reputation?

W-H-A-T! ———

Well, someone's AT IT!

He's the fellow you put to bed LAST o' nights.  
He wears your shoes and combs your hair and he  
signs your checks—that is, SOMETIMES he signs your  
checks!

We've been trying for WEEKS to get him to sign one for US. He knows he can and knows he SHOULD—but somehow he DOESN'T MAKE GOOD. He doesn't seem to give a hang for your REPUTATION as a fair, square, and honorable business man.

So he's damaging it—and WILL RUIN IT—if you don't stop him.

Might be a good idea for you to stir him up and let him know you are NOT THAT KIND, and won't have anybody around your place that is.

What do YOU think?

I wonder.

A touch of humor and the use of a blank check are combined for good effect by the collection manager of a paper company who addresses stubborn delinquent customers as follows:

Dear Mr. Jensen:

For the past thirteen years we have been receiving numerous checks daily, and as a result we have become much interested in names.

During this period our files have grown considerably. As time goes on, we observe a considerable difference in the styles of handwriting and thus have become "autograph-minded."

As we have not received a check from you for some time, your style of writing has no doubt changed considerably. To keep our files up to date as to your present manner of filling in the bank's name and your own name, will you please sign the check we have attached below.

(Sufficient space is left here for a blank check completely filled out except for the name of the bank and the signature.)

For your convenience in returning this check we are enclosing a stamped and self-addressed envelope. Upon receipt of it we will properly record your name in our files.

Yours very truly,



*The Draft as a Collector*

A businesslike action-getter in making collections is the draft. Its use is more or less restricted to debtors familiar with business procedure. Manufacturers, jobbers, and wholesalers draw drafts on their customers as a matter of routine. Usually their invoices and their statements of account specify clearly that "All bills when due are subject to drafts without notice." As a matter of courtesy, however, the debtor is usually given advance notice of a draft to be drawn. A somewhat novel use of the draft is that resorted to by a writer who by means of it and without delay collected from a magazine an amount of money due him for a certain contribution accepted and printed. At first the magazine had refused to pay on the ground that the article in question, though accepted and published, did not belong to those for which the publication usually paid.

The draft is an order on the debtor directing him to pay a certain sum of money either to the order of the drawer or to some third person. It may be at sight or at some future time, such as thirty, sixty, or ninety days. In the latter case, the draft, if accepted, becomes a promissory note. Drafts are transmitted to debtors through banks at their places of business.

Perhaps one of the main reasons why the draft is a prompt collector is found in the fact that quite frequently through the draft the debtor's bank is informed of the delinquency. If the banker is called upon to present numerous drafts to a certain debtor, he may conclude that the latter's credit is not what it should be. Since the debtor depends on his banker for loans and other, similar, so-called business courtesies, he can ill afford to let it be known in local banking circles that he is slow to meet his financial obligations. Some creditors prefer to have their drafts presented by a bank other than the debtor's own, chiefly because the latter, being prejudiced in favor of the debtor, may hold the draft too long before presenting it.

When a draft is refused, the drawer may present it again at a later date, write more collection letters, or use other and more stringent means to secure payment. Sometimes at presentation of a draft, the debtor states his reason for dishonoring it and to that extent aids the creditor in deciding on suitable future collection tactics. The reason for non-acceptance is usually written on the back of the draft and followed by the debtor's signature.

The letter forewarning the debtor of a draft usually takes the form of a simple and short notice:

I regret that I cannot release this order for shipment until you write me concerning settlement of our invoice of January 5 for \$251.67. A sight draft for this amount drawn on you February 14 was returned to our bank unpaid with no explanation given for non-acceptance.

If you have good cause for not remitting the amount due us immediately, I shall be glad to know what it is; otherwise, I expect your check for \$251.67 in accordance with our terms. Upon receipt of it I shall at once ask Mr. Khorr to release your order for shipment.

Yours very truly,

### *The Telegram as a Collector*

Even though the advent of more efficient air mail service has diminished the popularity of the telegram as a collector, many business firms still use it to secure payment of debts from other business establishments. Owing to the shock which the receipt of a telegram is likely to bring to an individual at his home, such a message, when used for purposes of collection, should always be sent to the debtor's business address.

The main advantages of the telegram as a collector lie in its brevity and urgency—the suggestion to take immediate action in a really important matter. These advantages are somewhat offset by the high cost of the telegram and by its lack of privacy. Nevertheless, there are many manufacturers and wholesalers who regard the telegram as a dependable and quick collector and who use it frequently, though not necessarily on the same account.

In a folder entitled "Delinquent Accounts Collected by Telegraph," the Western Union Telegraph Company furnishes a variety of form telegrams, among which are the following:

1. If account correct please remit according to terms of order.
2. Your remittance must be here Monday. Patience exhausted. Answer immediately.
3. Disappointed failure receive your check. When may we expect it?
4. Please remit September account past due. Imperative need. Thank you.
5. Why have you not paid January invoice? Remittance greatly appreciated.

### *Resorting to Legal Aid*

Once a business firm has failed to secure payment of a substantial debt, it will in many cases ask a professional collector or an attorney to collect it. Before a lawyer brings suit, he gives the debtor another opportunity to

make settlement. The treatment usually accorded delinquent debtors by lawyers is often curt and harsh. The lawyer, of course, is not concerned with his "client's" good-will. He wants his fee for his work. In order to get it as quickly as possible, he threatens the debtor in no uncertain language. Usually an attorney uses a short series of form letters, often individually typed and signed, in which the appeal to fear grows stronger and stronger. The following letter has the insistent tone which characterizes the kind of collection appeal used by a lawyer:

Dear Sir:

I have been instructed by the Franklin Company to take the necessary legal steps to enforce payment of your account for \$245.67, now over six months past due.

Before filing action, I am giving you this opportunity to make some definite adjustment of this account in order to avoid unnecessary court costs and legal expenses, which will have to be borne by you in the event that suit is started.

If you have any good reason for not paying this account, I will wait exactly five (5) days to hear from you. In case I do not receive a reply from you by February 27, I am going to assume that you do not want to pay this just debt and I will then take such legal steps as will secure payment.

Yours very truly,

A publisher, whose mail-order department sends books on a five-day inspection plan, operates his own collection agency, but under a different name. When a customer has failed to return books shipped him within the five-day period and also to reply to any one of ten collection notices and letters, he is then sent a form letter by the publisher's collection bureau. This particular letter has proved very effective in bringing delinquent debtors to terms, even though the amounts to be collected are less than five dollars. It has a filled-in date and inside address, as well as a form signature, but neither an opening nor a closing salutation. The letter reads as follows:

TAKE NOTICE THAT

The Imperial Publishing Company has filed formal complaint with us on your account for \$3.75.

This amount covers books sent you—months ago—on your signed order. In this contract you agreed either to return the books or to pay for

them within five days. You have done neither. Moreover, you have consistently disregarded notices and letters sent you by the Imperial Publishing Company.

Now that formal complaint has been filed with us, we are compelled either to collect the full amount without further delay or else to reduce the complaint to judgment, which will add interest charges, court costs, and attorney's fees to the amount you will be forced to pay.

Under no circumstances will these books be taken back in full or partial discharge of your obligation. The time for return or exchange has long expired. If the books are returned contrary to these instructions, they will be refused and you will be out the postage and trouble for your pains. Don't tell us that you have no money, are out of work, or ill. Such excuses will be disregarded and cannot in the slightest degree change our method of handling this matter.

We are giving you exactly TEN DAYS in which to get the full balance into this office. The matter is unconditionally in our hands. We simply cannot be responsible for action started or for the possibility of your having to pay a second time if you do not send the payment to us.

If payment is not here by the date set, our attorney will proceed at once. Do not let the size of this balance mislead you. Regardless of the amount involved, our contract with the Imperial Publishing Company compels us to collect it or else to deliver a certified copy of the judgment, and we shall not hesitate about doing so.

For your own protection see to it that the payment is here on the date set. If necessary, send it by special delivery, air-mail, or telegram. Don't wait for a second warning—there will NOT be any.

## PROBLEMS IN COLLECTIONS

1. The manager of the Snowwhite Laundry of your city has asked you to prepare a series of collection forms and letters suitable for his business. The system is to consist of two formal notifications and three personal letters, the last of which is to be a threat.

The first notification is sent to customers whose accounts are four weeks past due. The second notification is sent to customers whose accounts are six weeks past due. The first personal letter is sent to customers whose accounts are eight weeks past due. The second personal letter is sent to customers whose accounts are nine weeks past due. The third personal letter—a threat—is sent to customers whose accounts are

ten weeks past due. In addition to these collection forms and letters, itemized statements are sent out regularly on the first of the month.

The forms and letters of this series are to be sent to persons who have charge accounts. Their credit rating is good, but they are slow in meeting their obligations. In no case does the balance of a charge account exceed the sum of fifty dollars.

Prepare the two forms and the three personal letters.

2. You sold a well-known business man of your city, whose credit is unquestioned, a year's subscription to a magazine. When sending the original order he agreed to remit \$5 on receipt of bill. You have sent him two bills and three follow-up letters without result.

Your task is to prepare a letter that will collect the amount due and still retain the subscriber's friendship.

3. You publish a well-known magazine; the subscription of one of your readers—a subscription for one year, for which he paid promptly—has expired, and you have sent him at intervals of ten days two printed notices and then four follow-up letters without getting any response whatever.

Write a last letter which will either secure remittance for a year's renewal or obtain a response to justify the removal of the subscriber's name from the list.

4. You have sent books valued at \$5 each, for five-day free examination to persons who answered your magazine advertisement. The agreement stipulates either the return of the book within the five-day period or the payment in full of \$5.

(a) Write a letter for the purpose of inducing persons who have kept the book longer than five days without paying for it, to remit at once.

(b) Suppose you had sent three follow-up letters at intervals of ten days to a customer who kept the book without remitting for it. He now writes that he wants to return the book because he does not like it. How would you handle this case by letter?

5. As correspondent in the credit department of F. Kidder's Linen Store, 78 Lincoln Place, Chicago, Illinois, you are asked to-day, April 13, to write a personal collection letter to Mrs. Lovessa Catchall, 25 Yale Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

Mrs. Catchall has paid no attention to two printed notices and one personal letter. Write her the second personal letter. Be courteous but firm.

6. Carl Moru, Roosevelt, Wyoming, agreed to purchase some seed for your firm, the Roseville Seed Company, your city. Since he was unable to finance the prospective transactions, you deposited \$1,000 in his bank to be drawn on by him only for seed purchases to be shipped to your firm.

You fail to hear from him after he has shipped you about \$600 worth of seed. Your letters are returned "Unclaimed, party removed and left no address." You finally succeed in locating him in Berlin, Canada.

Your problem is to write a letter to Moru that will secure the \$400.

7. Robert Shirley, La Grande, Oklahoma, has been a customer of the Roseville Seed Company, your city, for several years. Up to about three months ago he has paid fairly promptly. He now owes the firm \$350.

The third collection follow-up letter to the customer brought the reply that, though willing to pay, he was unable to do so because collections are very slow with him just now. He asks for 60 days' more time. Answer him.

8. As manager of the credit department of the Wm. T. Runzler Manufacturing Company, your city, write a collection letter to E. F. Ohlendorf, Bingham, Utah, who bought a \$50 Gem Stove, agreeing to pay for it when he received his salary check. He has failed to pay the debt. His monthly salary is \$200. He bought the stove three months ago.
9. You are a member of the credit department of McFarley & Johnson, 68 Glover Place, Detroit, Michigan, a firm selling electrical supplies to dealers. You sold a bill of \$369 to Burton E. Glover, Ann Arbor, Michigan, on January 5. Terms were thirty days net. It is now April 1, and he has apparently disregarded your statements and printed reminders. His credit is good. Write him a personal letter.
10. Criticize; then rewrite the letter given below.

Dear Madam:

How do you like your last goods purchased from us on January 2? They are of a pretty good grade, aren't they?

We haven't heard anything to the contrary, so we are assuming that they pleased you.

Two different times we sent you statements of your account but perhaps "Mr. Waste Basket" was hungry and devoured them. We are wondering what will happen to this letter. Don't let him get this one!

Just reverse matters this time and feed us a remittance of \$124.87. We are hungry too.

Yours very truly,

11. Assume that you are the proprietor of a local service station. Among your customers is Mrs. R. C. Lott, who lives in a town nearby. She and her husband purchased gasoline and oil from you frequently on account. Mr. Lott usually settled for the account at the end of the month, paying all charge slips whether signed by his wife or himself.

Three months ago Mr. Lott died suddenly. Since then Mrs. Lott has not purchased anything from you. You hold charge slips—some signed

by the husband and some by the wife—totaling \$21.35. Mrs. Lott still drives her husband's car (a Packard) and resides at the same address. Twice you called at her home in the evening and each time she promised to come to the station and settle for the account. However, she never appeared.

Two months after Mr. Lott's death, you sent Mrs. Lott five collection letters in which you made a personal appeal for settlement of the debt. The fifth letter, sent by registered mail, read as follows:

Dear Madam:

As you know, I have been very patient in my attempt to collect \$21.35, which you owe for merchandise delivered by me, and for which I hold your and your husband's signed charge tickets.

I have wanted to keep your good-will and your trade and have hesitated to apply the usual collection methods to a woman of your standing.

Since you have not replied to any of my letters, the only recourse I have is to turn the account over to other hands for collection. It would, of course, be much pleasanter for us both if you would pay this small amount now.

To make sure that you receive this letter, I am sending it by REGISTERED MAIL.

I expect to hear from you by return mail.

Yours very truly,

This letter was answered by Mrs. Lott promptly by means of the following note:

My dear Mr. ———:

I received your letter to-day and I shall be glad to pay my bill if you will send me a copy or copies of my tickets.

I can see no reason why you should ask me to pay Mr. Lott's bills as we were divorced, and I am in no way responsible for any of his debts.

Sincerely,

You replied to your customer's letter immediately, enclosing exact copies of the charge tickets bearing her signature and totaling \$11.90. To date you have had no response from Mrs. Lott. Write her in order to collect the \$11.90 without further delay.

## COLLECTION LETTERS FOR STUDY AND REVISION

12. Dear Sir:

I know this account with you is as good as gold.

I realize that our bill is small and, in the press of other matters, it has been overlooked.

If yours were the only small account we have on our books, I should be pleased to send no more than a quarterly reminder until it suited your convenience to attend to it.

But ours is a business of small accounts. When they are not paid promptly, they involve much clerical work and become a source of errors.

Won't you coöperate and send us your check to-day so that we may balance your account? I shall appreciate the courtesy.

Sincerely yours,

13. Dear Sir:

Our accounting department does solemnly affirm, maintain, and assert that you owe us three dollars.

We dislike to get excited about three dollars. We also dislike the usual "collection letter" which bursts into tears in the first paragraph and yells for the law in the second.

The trouble is that you and 999 other customers all holding out three dollars leave us \$3,000 in the hole. It is this little problem in elementary arithmetic that shakes our faith in humanity.

So won't you "obey that impulse" and send us your check for \$3, for in your prompt remitting lies our ability to serve you well.

Yours very truly,

14. The following letters were prepared by a "collection service." They are claimed to be "far superior to the ordinary dun letters with usage of different style of language, different expressions, and reasoning from time to time in them."

A

Truly, your letter has been given careful consideration and it is not through lack of confidence that we decline granting your request for extension.

As automobile credits are not comparable with other securities on which money is loaned, it has been found necessary in the handling of deferred payments on automobiles, which are constantly depreciating in value, to require that payments be made as contracted and we shall, therefore, look forward to your prompt remittance of \$49.87, the amount due as of January 5.



## A

15. Unless we hear from you prior to —— with a remittance to apply on your account, we shall draw on you on that date for \$——, and if you permit us to draw, will expect you to take up the draft when presented.

Should you, for any good reason, desire us to withhold this draft, please write us, as otherwise the draft will be promptly issued on the date given.

## B

Since we have received no reply to our letter of ——, asking for a remittance to apply on your account, we have this day drawn on you for \$——, and expect you to honor the draft promptly upon presentation.

## CHAPTER XIII

### GOOD-WILL LETTERS

That the intelligent promotion of good-will is a vital and indispensable function of most routine letters has been emphasized in previous chapters, particularly in those treating replies to inquiries, follow-up of orders, and adjustments of complaints. In such correspondence, a thoughtful expression of good-will, whether in the form of some unexpected service or merely a cordial assurance of helpful interest in the reader's problems, is much more than a grand gesture. It provides everyday letters with some individuality, which makes their contents appealing and attractive. There arise, however, many occasions in business when the cultivation of good-will becomes the sole reason for writing the letter. It is such letters that this chapter presents.

#### *Need for Good-Will Promotion*

Good-will promotion is increasingly important because of more intelligent customers who are not easily "taken in" by blatant, high-powered advertising, recurring periods of prolonged depression, and, of course, because of sharp competition which makes sales more difficult. From among a confusing multitude of similar goods and services which, advertising claims notwithstanding, differ but little in price and less in quality a shrewd and educated consumer with increasing frequency selects those offered by firms whose careful cultivation of good-will has contributed largely to their success. High-rating firms, such as John Wanamaker, Marshall Field and Company, the Campbell Soup Company, the Eastman Kodak Company, and others, steadfastly affirm that the average customer must, if possible, be satisfied, that his good-will must be developed by every legitimate business method.

To transform their affirmations into profitable practice, these firms have organized special departments which function mainly to make relations with customers friendlier and firmer. Various names, such as sales promotion, business promotion, public relations, and service are given to these departments, which usually operate in close coöperation with either

the sales or the advertising department. Of course, the real purpose of any so-called service or customer department is to produce sales, but to do so indirectly—through good-will promotion. That in addition to newspaper, magazine, and radio advertising, the letter should be commonly utilized for this purpose is logical in view of its being economical, confidential, and personal.

It is true that most so called good-will promotion letters are camouflaged sales letters. The very indirectness of their selling talk catches the reader off guard: it is known to be much surer bait than direct sales presentation, no matter how clever and attention-gripping the latter may be.

According to their aim, good-will letters may roughly be divided into three classes:

1. Those designed not to sell at all, but to convey sentiment, as on birthdays and holidays.
2. Those designed to sell goods or services indirectly, such as letters welcoming new customers, expressing appreciation of patronage, inquiring the reasons for the discontinuance of patronage, and the like.
3. Those designed to sell goods or services directly, such as messages calling attention specifically to certain merchandise or service and addressed to new or to inactive charge accounts.

The various types of customers whom these more or less distinct kinds of good-will letters are commonly used to influence as well as the occasions on which they are sent, will now be considered in detail.

### *Good-Will Letters to Prospective Customers*

Just as many an individual widens his circle of friends through social letters, so a firm finds new customers through business letters. Most progressive firms, which have mailing lists of bona fide prospects, utilize the letter as one of the most direct and economical cultivators of good-will. Unlike general advertising, the letter is worded to appeal to the individual, not the mass. It may be sent to one or to a thousand persons at the most propitious time. Its effectiveness hinges largely on the resourcefulness of the sender and the interest value which he can give to his particular message. Its known usefulness as a good-will getter is widespread.

To every business man, whether retailer, wholesaler, or manufacturer, there come in the day's routine certain opportunities for good-will promotion and business expansion which can best be realized by means of suitable letters. Let us scrutinize a few of such opportunities.

To letters commending or criticizing its national radio broadcast, the president of an international tobacco company replies with a personally dictated and signed letter of good-will, followed by a gift box of cigarettes. An exclusive department store in Chicago never misses an opportunity to send birthday letters with small gifts to the youngsters of its many customers. A Canadian mountain resort, known far and wide for its charm and favored by "honeymooners," secures many reservations of new guests with the aid of letters which sell only indirectly. A man in Hollywood, who makes a comfortable living renting scales to the parents of new-born babies, approaches his prospects only by letter. Awaiting his turn in the barbershop, a security salesman reading *Life* chanced upon the list of contributors to its open-air fund. The same day he despatched letters to half a dozen prominent local business men whose names had appeared on that list, asking the privilege of an interview. His reasoning—that if these men could afford to give money away, they must have money to invest—proved logical, brought him interviews, sales, and commissions.

The extent to which direct sales effort should be made in a letter carrying good-will to a prospect depends very largely on the occasion and the purpose of that letter. Generally speaking, the recipient of any promotion letter will quickly sense the sender's real motive. After all, every so-called good-will letter is meant to be a sales letter, no matter how carefully its particular commercial aspects may have been masked. And yet the very fact that the message is couched in leisurely language, that its tone is eminently cordial, and, most important of all, that its primary purpose is to establish friendly relations between writer and reader, thus subordinating or eliminating entirely the usual business talk, clothes this type of business message with an atmosphere usually belonging to social correspondence. Because good-will letters breathe a warm, personal air, they are usually read and often make friends.

Most good-will letters sent to the prospective trade are form letters, more or less "personalized" by means of fill-ins of titles and inside addresses, as well as by the use of pen-and-ink signatures. To type such letters, which often go to thousands of names, individually would make their use almost prohibitively expensive. It is through careful wording and close adaptation to the reader's interests that the writer of such good-will letters must overcome the handicap of their being, of necessity, forms.

A New York hotel, catering to the better-class families, has found the following message, which is individually typed and signed by the social director (a woman), effective in furthering good-will:

Dear Madam:

No doubt you appreciate the fact that the demands of the modern traveler are constantly increasing, and that the value of a hotel lies in its ability to meet these additional demands.

At The Chateau we pride ourselves on our efficiency in keeping abreast of the times in matters concerning your comfort. Our location, service, rooms, restaurants, food, entertainment—they are all distinctive.

And you, as a woman, will appreciate our library, the children's playroom, and the chaperon service for college girls and other young women who wish to visit in New York. For your convenience we have also a file of unusual shops and fascinating places to visit.

When planning your next trip to New York, a note to me personally will place these various conveniences at your service.

Very truly yours,

The informal and chatty tone of the tailor's message given below is perhaps responsible for its drawing power:

Dear Mr. Bellaire:

Since there is really no good reason why I should have contact with my good customers only with a tape measure, I am writing just to say "Hello."

Please be assured that I shall be mighty glad to see you at any time, even if the tape measure stays in my pocket. If perchance I have not as yet had the pleasure of serving you, come in and get acquainted. I'll hide the tape measure from you, too.

Yours very truly,

Far be it from me to bring up the subject of fall suits.

The letter which follows was sent by a bank to a small group of carefully selected professional men in a town of five thousand. In addition to written responses of good-will, it resulted in the opening of a number of substantial accounts. The letter was typewritten and signed by the president. A pen-and-ink postscript gave it an added personal touch.

Dear Mr. Dewey:

The Citizens Bank of Villanova, your only home bank, has just completed its first year of service to this, Your Community.

It is strictly a local institution, financed, officered, and directed by men personally interested in Villanova's welfare. Many of these men are your personal friends. Their reputation for being successful business men is a guarantee of the bank's careful management.

To you this bank offers its various facilities: the Savings Department, Safety Deposit Boxes and Storage Vault, Foreign Exchange and Travelers' Checks, and such other services as go with careful and conservative banking. All these are extended with the assurance of safe and confidential treatment of your affairs, prompted by thoughtful courtesy and cordial interest—qualities which have distinguished the service of the Citizens Bank of Villanova from the very beginning.

We feel that this bank has a just claim to your banking business and also to your co-operation in helping its officers and stockholders to build an institution of increasing value to Villanova and adjacent territory.

Please read in the enclosed folder of the very encouraging progress made by us during the first year. This healthy growth proves in a measure that the people of Villanova do appreciate a Home Bank.

Join hands with us and with our friends, Mr. Dewey, to make the Citizens Bank an even more vital factor in the development of Villanova.

Cordially yours,

Feel free to drop into my office at any time. You will always be welcome whether you want to talk business or just say "Hello."

### *Good-Will Letters Offering Gifts*

In order to gain the prospective customer's friendly attention, many business establishments, especially retailers, "bait" their good-will letters with offers of gifts. The effectiveness of such messages depends very much on the spirit in which the offer is made, assuming that the motive underlying it is usually the same.

Letters offering gifts create a feeling of friendliness only if their recipients are clearly told that they are under no obligation to buy, even to

reply. For, if they are placed under such obligation, then the letter defeats its own purpose: the gift becomes a burden. Many a recipient of a billfold, memo book, or other trifling present offered him through the medium of a letter, has afterwards been so persistently and openly hounded by salesmen and "representatives" that he has vowed he will never again be caught in a similar trap. If a follow-up of the original gift letter is used, it should above all else be very tactful and unobtrusive.

So above-board is the free offer made in the following letter, signed by the editor, that it cannot possibly arouse the reader's suspicions:

Dear Professor Naether:

Mr. William Butterworth, Chairman of the Board of Deere and Company, Moline, Illinois, and former President of the United States Chamber of Commerce, has authorized me to send you with his compliments the Nation's Business for four months, starting with the current issue. It came about this way:

Mr. Butterworth recently wondered if we had ever asked you and other teachers of economics to subscribe. I replied that I thought Nation's Business would be considered too popular in treatment to appeal to you. He dissented, and the friendly argument resulted in his offer to send Nation's Business to you for a short period, in order to introduce it to you. He believes that you would appreciate our problem, which is somewhat different from yours, that in reaching 300,000 business men, the approach necessarily must be different from that of the classroom.

You are under no obligation whatsoever. If you feel disposed to comment after you have looked over the first number, I know Mr. Butterworth would be extremely gratified, and so would I.

With best wishes.

Yours sincerely,

More obligation is attached to the free offer set forth in the following letter. It was beautifully printed on so-called linen paper of note size, bearing colorful pictures of the gift. Whether its recipient will accept it, depends on whether or not she is willing to listen to the sales talk most likely to be delivered by the retailer's clerk as she hands the lipstick over.

Dear Madame:

May I present to you—a gift from Paris?

I want you, who are used to the feel of fine things, to know the aristocracy of Maire cosmétiques, as expressed to delicate perfection in a Maire Lipstick. I want you, by using this lipstick, to recognize its smoothness against your lips, its softening quality, the subtle blending of its coloring to yours.

And, through your introduction to Maire, I want you to become better acquainted with "the art that is Maire"—Maire of Paris! For in the suave sophistication of a Maire Lipstick you have the indication of what "cosmétiques by Maire" means—the freshness, the natural beauty, the fragrance, and the truly Parisian character of these requisites to beauty—Cosmétiques that are not merely make-up, but actually a charming flattery to one's personality.

So, to a group of the select I am sending this gift order. Merely present the enclosed card at the toilettries department of the store it mentions. You will be presented with a Maire Lipstick in a harmonizing shade. Use it often, Madame—its gaiety is good for the soul—and be assured of my profound respect and consideration.

Maire

### *Offering Charge Accounts*

One of the most popular ways of furthering good-will is to offer financially responsible persons the advantages of a monthly charge account. In addition to the convenience of making purchases without having to pay for them at the time, these advantages consist of the customer receiving advance information of all special sales and bargain events, of being offered better shopping facilities and thus becoming more thoroughly familiar with the service features of a store, and, finally, of establishing a local credit standing.

To preclude the opening of accounts for customers likely to be "poor pay," most retailers will send letters offering credit privileges only to lists of preferred "risks." Nor is it true that such letters are addressed only to strangers, since frequently they are designed to induce cash customers to become charge customers. Since ordinarily it takes considerable time and effort to wean a customer away from another store and thus to change his or her buying habits, this form of good-will promotion letter is often sent out as part of a well-planned campaign follow-up. Its primary function is to convince the prospective charge customer that he is likely to receive more intelligent and more personal service by saying, "Charge it."



It is, of course, a known fact that when persons enjoy charge-account accommodations, they purchase more merchandise than they do or would otherwise. This is true because most credit customers feel that when making a purchase they are not parting with any money, and that the day on which payment has to be made is yet far off.

The amount of direct selling effort in letters offering account privileges varies with the nature of the business and the type of person solicited. Wholesalers and manufacturers use such letters rarely, preferring to receive applications for credit through their sales departments as initial orders are being placed. Most retailers, however, especially department and similar stores, find them excellent good-will builders and business getters. Since many retailers compete for the charge account of a person with a satisfactory credit rating, and since that person in all probability maintains already one or more such accounts, it is usually difficult to persuade him or her to open an additional account. Thus, letters written to such persons usually explain in some detail the particular benefits likely to accrue from the opening of a monthly account at the writer's store. These benefits usually pertain to the special policies—price and grade of merchandise and quality of service—featured by the retailer. Each boasts in his letter of special bargains, personal service, and a distinctive atmosphere so that the recipient is often bewildered by a mass of conflicting claims.

On the other hand, letters soliciting charge accounts from persons who rate doubtful "pay," who do not own property, and who have small and uncertain incomes, need not contain much persuasion or marshal many talking points to bring results. For such persons avail themselves only too readily of the opportunity thus afforded to buy on monthly terms. All they need is the stimulation—the bare offer of a charge account. In this connection, the following successful form letter sent by a "family credit clothier" to wage earners, such as clerks and laborers of various kinds, is *à propos*:

Dear Friend:

One of our good customers, a dear friend of yours, who is one of our best accounts, states that you are worthy of credit to be used at either of our stores.

We are, therefore, enclosing a recommendation card to be presented to the credit department, and we can assure you it will be our pleasure to serve you at any time.

Very truly yours,

In contrast to the foregoing, the following appeals made by a metropolitan department store which does business in a highly competitive field, should be of interest. Whereas the first letter details the various features of a charge account, the second emphasizes perhaps the most important—"courtesy day for credit customers." Both typify those appeals used by the better retail houses. Observe their friendly "you" note and their specific suggestion.

Both are sales letters in that they offer a definite service for a consideration. They attract attention by means of short openings which at once inform the reader of the writer's purpose; they endeavor to awaken desire by explaining special advantages of the charge account; and they promote action by positive suggestion and the enclosure of a convenient reply card. Only the third function of the sale—conviction or proof—is omitted, no doubt because it is assumed that the reader, having in all probability other charge accounts, is already convinced of their convenience. Thus, proof in the form of specific testimonials from customers attesting voluntarily to the value of their charge accounts, might have been effective.

## I

Dear Mr. Bonney:

You know, of course, how convenient a charge account is, but do you know the special advantages an account at The First Avenue Shop offers you?

You'll find our Shops for Men—including one of the largest and most complete Men's Furnishings sections in the city, Men's Hats and Men's Shoes—easily accessible, without going through other departments, from either the Yale Street or the Second Avenue entrance.

Men's Clothing and Sporting Goods on the Third Floor are quickly and conveniently reached by both escalators and elevators.

Announcements of special sales before they are advertised to the public give you an opportunity to make your selection, unhurried and unhampered by sale crowds.

The time-saving feature of being able to supply all your varied needs, even groceries, under one large roof, is well worth considering.

A charge account will add greatly to your enjoyment of the many special features of our service. If you will fill out the enclosed card, so that we may have the necessary information for our

files--returning it in the envelope provided--we will write you as soon as the account is ready for use.

Very truly yours,

2

Dear Mr. Bonney:

An event of so much interest will take place this week that we are inviting you to open a charge account now so that you may share in its advantages.

In the only way in which a store can express a sincere "Thank You" to its friends--thru value-giving--we are celebrating nine years of success in Des Moines with an event of outstanding import.

Our Ninth Anniversary Sale opens February 24, but Friday, February 25, is Courtesy Day for our charge customers. You, too, are invited to participate in the savings before the sale is announced to the public.

The enclosed Courtesy Day Announcement gives a partial list of--not everyday values--not even everyday First Avenue Shop values--but extraordinary values made possible through amazing good-will price concessions from Des Moines and manufacturers elsewhere in appreciation of our enormous yearly business with them.

Your account is ready for use as soon as we receive the enclosed card, filled out and signed. It will help us serve you promptly if you will leave it at our Credit Office Friday before you make your purchase.

Very truly yours,

Some firms mail credit cards to desirable prospective customers and open charge accounts in their names without first asking if these conveniences are really wanted. This practice of obtaining new business is not as bold as that of a certain mail-order house which, so good authority has it, began functioning by mailing merchandise to likely prospects even though they had not ordered it at all. The mail-order firm hoped in this rather obtrusive manner to close a certain percentage of profitable sales, an assumption which proved to be correct and which later resulted in many orders. However, most well-established firms frown upon the practice of cheapening credit by giving it unasked.

An automobile tire company sends the following message to car owners employed in the government of a city:

days of commerce, a new customer was welcomed personally and often entertained royally. Whatever one may think of this old-fashioned practice, it had the supreme advantage of being direct and cordial. To-day the tempo of business is so fast that the average business man knows his customers only by their balances in his ledgers.

In order to lend their relations with new customers at least some semblance of humanness, progressive business men resort to letters of welcome. Their purpose is two-fold: to show appreciation and to explain merchandising policies in order to facilitate and to stimulate the new-comer's trade. Usually the profit realized on a first order does not offset the cost of promoting it. To make the deal profitable, further orders must be secured. The letter of welcome is depended upon to accomplish this important end.

Good letters of welcome are characterized by straightforward and personal expressions of appreciation, coming preferably from someone in authority, followed by terse comments on sales, credit, collection, and other service policies. Many such letters advertise goods and service freely, usually ending with an urge to make prompt use of the new account facilities. An agreeable atmosphere of "We are ready to serve you in friendly fashion and to the best of our ability" should pervade such letters to give the new customer at least some inkling of the seller's individuality.

A retailer catering largely to business and professional men, who demand quality goods and quality service, approaches his new charge customers by means of a simple message expressing appreciation and setting forth briefly certain features of his merchandise and service. It is an individually typed form, signed by the credit manager:

Dear Mr. Vick:

It's a real pleasure to enter your name on our books as a charge customer. We appreciate this opportunity to serve you.

You have the privilege of charging purchases at any one of our ten stores—located in Detroit and environs.

We will send you a detailed statement of your account on the first day of each month, payable on or before the tenth.

We shall make every effort to render satisfactory service. Our name has been associated with Quality apparel in Detroit for 49 years. Good merchandise, fair prices, and a notable service

have built the Howard reputation over this long period.

Shop at your most convenient Howard Store.  
Remember—your Charge Account is good at any one of them.

Cordially,

While letters bidding new customers welcome are used largely by retail houses, whose customers' relations are more personal and more easily broken than those of manufacturers and wholesalers, the latter also recognize their usefulness. The letter which follows is used by a manufacturer. Its purpose is to show personal interest in the reader, to smooth the way for a mutually satisfactory business connection.

Such a letter, sent upon receipt of new business, usually makes the first contact of the home office with the new customer. It sets an example of the kind of treatment which the customer may expect later on. Ordinarily, no reply is expected. Once the customer has received the first shipment of goods, however, he often writes concerning his satisfaction or dissatisfaction with it, also asking for advertising and such other sales promotion material as the seller's dealer-service department may be prepared to supply.

*Keeping the New Customer Satisfied*

It is not so much the receipt of payment that concludes a business transaction as it is the receipt of the customer's assurance that he is satisfied. Modern business, therefore, follows up orders received from new customers by means of suitable letters similar to the following:

Dear Mrs. Kennedy:

We are interested in finding out whether or not the Anson Awnings recently installed on your home are satisfactory in every way.

No matter how careful we are about manufacturing and installing your awnings, we cannot hope to make them always one hundred per cent perfect. For this reason we have to depend on our customers and our other good friends to let us know if things are not up to our usual standards of excellence. We certainly trust that you are pleased with your new awnings, but if you are not, we should like to hear about it.

After awnings are up, an owner sometimes discovers that some of the windows for which awnings were not originally provided, look bare or unattractive in comparison with those which have awnings. Should this be true in your case, we would appreciate the opportunity to submit further suggestions.

Will you do us the favor of filling out the enclosed card and mailing it back to us? Thank you.

Yours very truly,

*Good-Will Letters to Old Customers*

For every single effort put forth to gain the good-will of a new customer, half a dozen or more efforts should be made to retain that of the old customer. The latter constitutes the backbone of any business, the established trade, the known and dependable market, without which the seller could most assuredly not continue successfully in business. Far too many business men lavish costly advertising campaigns on getting prospects, the while neglecting their customers.

It is usually more profitable and more satisfactory to do business with an old than with a new customer, since the sales, credit and collection, order, and adjustment department files reveal much information concerning the habits of an old customer: what, when, and how often he buys; how frequently he complains and why; how promptly he pays. Moreover,

customers at weddings and other important family festivities, mustered sufficient courage to suggest to the firm whose long-time customer she was, the advisability of its making her son, who "also buys many things from you," a wedding present. A European retailer would under such circumstances have sent a gift as a matter of course. The reply which this Dutch mother received is given in the second letter, and it can hardly be said to further good-will. While it explains the firm's policy clearly, it lacks the touch of sympathetic imagination. Moreover, it is very doubtful if any business establishment, even one having "millions of customers," receives "thousands of similar requests." Even if the correspondent answering this somewhat unusual request knew nothing of the highly personal trade relations existing ordinarily between retailer and customer in Europe, he might have seized this opportunity to express his firm's gratitude in some small, but substantial, way for a patronage extending over three decades. A simple, sincere note of congratulation without any comment on the business policy and accompanying an inexpensive gift would in all probability have retained her warm interest in the firm.

## I

Gentlemen:

You will be surprised at this letter, but I only wish to tell you that thirty years ago my husband and I, having come from Holland, were married and came to this town to live. As you well know, we bought our entire housekeeping outfit from you, and we have bought from you ever since.

Our oldest son was married not long ago. He also buys many things from you. Don't you think you should send him a little remembrance? He would appreciate it so much. You might send it to me and I will forward it to him.

Very sincerely,

Dear Mrs. Van Drimlen:

We appreciate very much your letter of June 20 and extend congratulations to yourself, husband, and son. While we should like to accommodate you in the way you suggest, we cannot do it without being unfair to our thousands of other customers.

It would not do to make a present to one family when we could not do it to thousands of others who write in with similar requests. If we could, we should have to increase our prices, which already are very low, in order to care for this increased expense.

After this explanation, we know you will agree with us that we should keep our prices at the lowest possible level and, therefore, we hope you will excuse us.

Yours truly,

That it is not at all unusual for American firms to say "Thank you" in a substantial way for past patronage is shown by a letter bearing the president's signature which a retail furniture firm sent to customers whom it had served for two or more years. Needless to say, these customers were delighted with this token of good-will.

Dear Mrs. Farrar:

I am enclosing a check with my compliments, made out to you and for your use in any of our stores, Thursday, February 22nd, Washington's Birthday.

As you will observe, the amount of the check has been left blank. After you have made selections on this day, it will be filled in to the amount of 10% of your total purchases and credited to your account.

I want you to feel that this check is, in reality, a token of my appreciation for your past patronage. I felt there could be no better time to express it than on Washington's Birthday, when you will have the leisure to shop.

Bought at far below to-day's wholesale costs, our great stocks of Period and Modern Suites, as well as odd pieces, rugs, radios, electrical appliances, etc., offer wide selection and outstanding value.

Please come in Thursday. If you cannot come during the day, come in the evening, as all our stores will be open until 9 P.M. And be sure to bring the enclosed check with you.

Sincerely yours,

### *Retaining Established Patronage*

A large portion of so-called special service rendered by manufacturer to wholesaler, by wholesaler to retailer, and by retailer to consumer is to retain good-will. Anyone conversant with techniques employed to "manufacture" customers, knows full well the high cost of keeping old customers satisfied and in the buying mood. Any business man selling a repeat product or service must cultivate his customers in between orders, or else



risk losing them. To this end manufacturers and wholesalers use their agents and salesmen, and, of course, their dealer-service departments, supplemented by various forms of direct and indirect advertising.

Thus a shoe manufacturer maintains a service department for the various retail shoe stores that stock his wares. The diverse services which this department is called upon to render are shown by the fact that it has been requested to recommend architectural plans for the remodeling of stores, to write special advertisements for programs of band concerts, to design new stationery and window displays, and to prepare letters which the shoe merchant sends to old and to prospective customers. In addition, the service department maintains a model shoe store which does not sell shoes, but in which the various dealer helps are thoroughly tested before they are passed on to the trade. Accordingly, this manufacturer's customers are assured of expert and sympathetic coöperation in the solution of any important business problem which may confront them. It is by means of such and similar coöperation that the manufacturer maintains and strengthens the good-will relations of his customers.

Even broader and certainly more personal is the service which many a retailer furnishes the consumer. One need only consider the almost innumerable means which the modern department store seizes upon to prejudice the consumer's mind and heart in its favor: the children's nursery which entertains Mrs. Consumer's offspring in thoroughly approved fashion the while Mama shops leisurely; the lecture room in which a variety of free entertainment, such as motion pictures, concerts, book reviews, travel talks, and cooking demonstrations, is offered; the information bureau which attempts to answer questions relating to every conceivable phase of modern housekeeping and home life. While the rendition of many of these rather expensive and often inessential conveniences has increased the cost of doing business, it has likewise increased good-will. The business which keeps maximum good-will to-day is usually the one which renders maximum service with whatever it sells.

The most natural way in which to retain an old customer's patronage is to keep calling to his attention the various reasons why he should buy the seller's merchandise, to follow him up at suitable intervals of time. Thus many business firms write letters to inform their customers of the different stocks of goods they carry, of the arrival of fresh stocks and new lines, of changes in quality and price, of the opening of new departments, new branches, new stores. To give its customers an idea of the completeness and modernity of its stocks, a department store writes in part to its customers:

and price of merchandise bought. The number of times a customer places orders for goods during the year depends on his economic position, whether he is a manufacturer, wholesaler, retailer, or consumer; on the length of time which the goods or services purchased, last; the number of sources (competitors) which meet a single customer's needs; the season of the year; the financial condition of the customer; the past treatment accorded him by the seller; and other, similarly important matters. Complete and up-to-date sales and credit files are very likely to yield further revealing clues to the customer's buying habits. By summarizing and scrutinizing the data gleaned from all reliable and available sources, the business man can tell quite accurately when, under normal conditions, he should receive orders from the trade.

To make reasonably sure that he gets at least the main portion of business from each customer, the retailer will at regular intervals of three, six, or twelve months, according to the nature of his business, compile a mailing list of inactive accounts. The names on this list are then circularized by means either of single letters or else of follow-up series, depending largely on the length of and the reason for the inactivity, as well as on the amount of money available for such good-will promotion. The following simple inquiry succeeded in "rejuvenating" 16% of a retailer's old and inactive accounts:

Dear Mr. Black:

The very first task assigned me when I became a member of the Bonner Economic Service was to scrutinize the ledger cards of its customers.

Some of the things I discovered I cannot quite understand; for example, our not having had an opportunity to serve you for the last six months.

Please write me what prompted you to pass us by, so that I may do whatever I can to justify your renewed good-will and patronage from now on.

I shall be much interested in your reply. Please put it in the enclosed stamped envelope, as I want it to come to my desk unopened.

Very truly yours,

Since dissatisfaction with some particular phase of the seller's business dealings accounts for the largest loss of good-will, letters written to bring back "lost" customers usually ask its specific nature. Once the barrier separating buyer from seller is known, the latter can in the majority of cases remove it, thus regaining an old customer. Such removal of ob-

land—that our styles are dictated by the leading custom tailors in England, which means impeccable taste plus that "easy," nonchalant air that is an Englishman's heritage. Moreover, each suit is handcut, handtailored, and handpressed by experts, who are chosen for their exacting skill.

Our topcoats and overcoats boast the same sartorial distinction.

This is a special invitation, Mr. Gray, to visit our third floor "for men only." You will be agreeably surprised to find that there we have created "a man's place in the sun."

Privacy, leisurely selection, and courteous attention are at your service.

Cordially yours,

Dear Mrs. Goddard:

I have had it in my mind for the last month to tell you about some of our accessories, which, I assure you, are the last word in the glorification of "little things."

Exquisite evening slippers in brocade or velvet reveal the advanced mode for the season's formal wear. One brocade in particular—"Damasse"—was seen consistently at the opera. And for those who are never content—bless them—along comes the latest conceit of the season—lovely little evening bags to match these slippers.

Speaking of bags, they are all here, for all occasions and, believe it or not, there is something new under the sun after all—one bag in "Borosa" leather in several striking combinations of color.

Our Alexandrian gloves are French to the finger tips—pull-ons with side openings, hand stitches; others have marvelous trick cuffs. All of which only goes to prove that French gloves are still the fashion.

I should love to have you come in to see these fashionable things for yourself, Mrs. Goddard, for my pet obsession is the desire to give every smart woman the opportunity to wear them.

Sincerely yours,

A nationally known department store terms an account inactive when it is paid up and when no charges have been made against it during the succeeding month or months. At the end of each month, the customer is mailed the regular statement showing the account in balance and also

a pamphlet featuring special merchandise for the following month. In December before Christmas, in February before the mid-winter sale, and in March before spring shopping, special form letters individually typed are despatched to all inactive accounts in order to revive them.

According to the store's manager, "the customer prefers to be told in a straightforward, businesslike letter why we are writing him. Having enjoyed the charge privilege at our store for many months, often many years, he usually has much good-will for the store. Our letters, therefore, must be personal to be effective. Naturally, they must also have merchandise and price appeal. We thank him for his past patronage and the promptness with which he has paid his account. We add that we have missed his business and inquire as to whether his failure to continue to patronize us is due to any fault of ours. In eight out of ten cases, we receive a courteous reply from the customer, expressing satisfaction with our merchandise and service, but occasionally stating that owing to certain circumstances, he has found it necessary to refrain from making other than cash purchases, of which we have received the benefit."

In studying the three letters used by this store, it should be noted that the merchandise appeal dominates and that none of them makes emphatic or negative reference to the inactivity of the customer's account. They show constructive selling effort and reclaim much lost good-will.

# I

Dear Mr. Welland:

You'll find "Christmas Cheer costs less this year," when you come to Roanoke's to do your Holiday Shopping. Christmas gifts cost less this year than for eighteen years, and every corner of this great store is thrilling with inspiration for your lists.

There are hundreds of intelligent salespeople waiting to serve you. The Shoppers' Bureau is at your command to shop with you or for you—as you please. It's all so delightfully exciting, with the traditional Roanoke Spirit of Courtesy and Good-will prevailing in the tingling atmosphere.

And the famous Roanoke Quality is maintained!

Use your Roanoke charge account to make Christmas Shopping still more easy. You have only to say "Charge it," you know. If you are contemplating gifts for the home, we shall be glad to arrange Budget Credit or any of our convenient deferred plans for you.

We wish it were possible to add a handclasp to our friendly Yuletide Greeting for happiness and good cheer.

A very merry Christmas and a glad New Year to you.

Cordially,

2

Dear Miss Monroe:

"Potatoes are cheaper," hummed Mr. to Mrs. Happy Homes. They were purchasing furniture and home furnishings in the Roanoke Mid-Winter Sale of Furniture—making home more comfortable, more cheerful—at the lowest prices in our memory.

What a sale! There's a breakfast set of maple—perhaps it's an odd chair you've been looking for; a secretary; that davenport with its soft, luxurious cushions; lovely things that grow dearer year by year. Choose now from great floors of fine furniture, rugs, and furnishings for a cozy room or a pretentious home, at prices lower than you've ever known.

Your credit is already established. The Little Home that Budget Built offers many inspiring suggestions. The trained personnel of the Roanoke Budget Staff is ready to help you in planning and buying.

Furniture floors and restaurants are open until nine o'clock on Monday evenings during the sale. Spend a pleasant evening with us. We shall be happy to see you again.

Yours very truly,

3

Dear Mrs. Chase:

Is the spring shopping urge upon you?

Of course it is! You have important shopping to do for yourself, for the children, and for the house you live in. And aren't you happy to know that we've thought of all the important things long before you thought of them yourself?

You know the pleasure of shopping at Roanoke's . . . but just to remind you of a few bright, particular corners which will delight you this season.

There are

Coin de Paris . . . gay with Paris originals.

The Children's Shops . . . in full bright bloom.

The Junior Miss . . . has a shop of her own.

The Gift Shop . . . with bridge prizes aplenty.

The Famous Silk Store . . . a Roanoke Tradition.

The Men's Shops . . . complete service . . . on the Second Floor.

And when it comes to the house you live in, do visit the Little Home that Budget Built. It's simply agog with spring inspiration and enthusiasm . . . and you know that when it comes to home furnishings, you may avail yourself of the Budget Credit Service, which means you can pay out of income.

And please don't forget your charge account. Use it. That's what it's here for . . . to make shopping at Roanoke's a delightful adventure, shorn of any bothersome detail . . . you've only to say "Charge it" . . . it's just that simple . . .

We shall be happy to welcome you again.

Cordially,



## JUSTER BROTHERS

37-49 South Sixth St.  
Minneapolis

May 16, 19-

We just gotta get  
back into this ball game,  
Mr. Allard.



You still have us benched ---

Here we are --- waiting for you with a flock of  
"home runs" in our system and you haven't put us  
up to bat for a whale of a while.

On the level, Mr. Allard ---  
what's wrong with the way we play ball? We've  
always tried to have our merchandise here at  
Justers good enough to make a "hit" in any  
league --- no "foul tips" and no "bush league"  
performance.

We try mighty hard to have every department of  
our store on its toes all the time --- first  
with the newest styles, long on quality and "big  
leaguers" for service.

Take it from me, it hurts plenty to have an old  
customer keep us out of the game for as long as  
you have. Won't you at least tip us off as to  
why we haven't been up to bat lately?

Better yet, stop in some day this week and look  
over some of the real "hits" we are offering for  
spring and early summer. I'll be mighty happy  
just to see you and have a chance to say "hello".

Mr. F. L. Allard,  
4119 Irving Ave. So.,  
Minneapolis.

Sincerely,

*P. B. Juster*  
Sincerely for  
J U S T E R B R O S .

UNUSUAL LETTER USED TO REVIVE INACTIVE ACCOUNTS



## JUSTER BROTHERS

37-43 South Sixth St.  
Minneapolis

Miss Smith,  
take a letter to  
Mr. H. L. Johnson.

He still is at  
620 Rand Tower,  
isn't he, Mr. Juster?



Was my face red ....

this morning when I went browsing through our ledger and found how many months had elapsed since you favored Justers' with a bit of your patronage.

We haven't been up to bat when you have been "pitching" your clothing purchases for a while of a long time. And gosh, I'd like to know why we have been "benched".

Especially with the brand of merchandise in every department which we thought would make a "hit" in any league.

So here's asking you "how come" you sent us to the "showers"?

I can't tell you how much I'd appreciate it if you would tip me off as to why we have missed you all these months. Won't you come in? Our new Spring merchandise is very attractive and truly reasonably priced.

Sincerely,

*P. B. Juster*  
Manager for  
JUSTER BROS.

PEJ:S  
March 28, 19--



*Letters of Appreciation*

While the everyday correspondence output of many firms shows a "Thank you" here and there, letters devoted entirely to proper expressions of appreciation are by no means rare. A simple and sincere message of gratitude, without selling talk of any kind, is likely to be read and remembered with pleasure. It has both, attention and memory values, which being favorable, promote good-will.

To be effective a letter of appreciation should above all else be personal. To use form letters for this purpose indicates that the sender wishes to dispose of the whole matter in a cheap and impersonal way. Much more appropriate are messages personally dictated and signed by an official whom the recipient already knows.

Letters showing appreciation may be classified according to whether they are meant for prospective, new, or old customers. Another, and perhaps somewhat more satisfactory, classification is one based on the particular occasion prompting the writing of such letters. It is well to say "thank you"—

- for special interest shown in the seller's business
- for the opening of new accounts
- for the placing of new and of repeat orders
- for the prompt payment of accounts,

and for many other, similar manifestations of good-will too numerous to list separately. Oftentimes it is not so much the occasion which should prompt the sending of a special letter of appreciation as it is the desire of a business to be on friendly terms with its particular buying public. Let us now observe how various business firms write "Thank you" letters.

When an optical firm learned that it had secured a new customer upon the recommendation of an old one, it promptly wrote the latter:

Your courtesy in referring Mrs. Abbott to us is greatly appreciated. She has had a thorough examination, and we know that her eyes will be benefited.

It is through the thoughtfulness of such friends as you that we are encouraged to give better and better service, and that we have obtained a large portion of our business during the past forty-five years.

When a bank has received a new account through the courtesy of a customer, its director of public relations writes:

We want you to know how much we appreciate your bringing Mr. Walter Thompson to our bank. The

spirit of friendliness and co-operation which you have shown by introducing Mr. Thompson and other friends to the Manitou National Bank is a source of genuine pleasure to us.

It will be our earnest endeavor to render your friends the kind of banking service which you would like them to have.

When a prospective tenant has visited a certain exclusive apartment house, he is followed up in this manner:

Thank you for your recent visit to Chelsea Corners and also for permitting us to show you several of our apartments.

There are still a few very attractive apartments available for fall occupancy. Before you consider a lease elsewhere, may we ask you to call once more at our renting office.

We shall appreciate the privilege of being of further service to you soon.

For the opening of a new account, a bank president says "Thank you" in this manner:

The fact that you have opened an account at this bank pleases me very much. Thank you! I sincerely trust that our relations will prove pleasant and profitable for a long time to come.

Besides serving as a safe depository, there are many ways in which this bank can be useful to its patrons. I cordially invite you to visit with our officers and become acquainted with the various phases of our service.

I shall always welcome constructive criticism and suggestions, which will enable us to render more helpful banking service.

For the resumption of business relations, a department store shows its gratitude by means of a brief note:

It is with pleasure that we note you have recently resumed the use of your charge account at The Wertheim.

We count as our greatest asset the good-will of our friends. It is our constant endeavor to render such service that these friendly relations will continue to grow throughout the years.

Repeat orders, especially when they are few and far between, furnish plentiful occasion for letting the customer know that his business and

good-will are valued highly. When a manufacturer of automobile trucks received such an order, its president dictated the following message:

A repeat order from an old customer is the highest endorsement which any product can receive. That is the reason why your recent truck purchase gives me much personal satisfaction.

You know from past experience how hard we are working to build our trucks right and to service them right. You know that our interest in our trucks does not stop when they are delivered and paid for.

Please let me repeat what has been told you before. Our system of service stations is maintained to protect the earning power of every one of our trucks wherever it is used. This system can be a real money-saver to you.

If you have not been making full use of the bureau of information and service, which is part of the system just mentioned, be sure to do so now.

If a customer has settled her account with special promptness, a city furniture store rewards her in the following manner:

In appreciation of the opportunity which you have given us to serve you, we are enclosing a Preferred-Rate Credit Card.

If we can help you further in the replacement or addition of other furniture in your home, we shall be glad to have one of our representatives call to appraise any furniture you may wish to use as a credit on your new purchase, or to assist you in planning any re-furnishing you may have in mind.

Please telephone Moby 8567, Station 3 for Home Planning Service; Station 4 for Appraisal Service; and Station 5 for General Information.

Holidays, such as Christmas and others, furnish an especially opportune occasion for expressing good-will to customers. Such expressions of sentiment should be brief and ungarnished. Long and effusive holiday messages usually smack of hypocrisy and ulterior motive. Many life insurance agents send birthday greetings to their policy holders on neat cards free from advertising.

When the depositors of a bank, approximately five thousand in number, received the following letter signed by the president, more than four hundred replied in similar vein, and a large number stopped at his office to extend seasonal greetings personally:

Years ago, when depositor and banker were personal acquaintances, the exchange of New Year's greetings had an intimate heartiness, which this typewritten letter must necessarily lack.

None the less, I do wish you, warmly, a New Year of personal happiness, together with a full measure of the good things of life. Nor can I overlook my sincere appreciation of your part in our own good year just closing.

In sending you these somewhat formal greetings, I hope that at some time when you come to this bank, I may have the opportunity of getting better acquainted with you and the pleasure of greeting you personally.

A manufacturer has found this more or less general Christmas greeting effective. Of course, he uses a different one each season.

Merry Christmas!

These two simple words speak our sentiments more eloquently than could any phrase of our own making. There is no use trying to improve on them.

We realize that there would be no "Merry Christmas" for us, were it not for the patronage and good-will of you and our other good customers. And so we are very grateful to you.

Here's wishing that your Christmas may be all that you want it to be.

## PROBLEMS

1. Assume that you are the owner of a retail store selling men's and women's ready-to-wear clothing. You have obtained the names of fifty of your cash customers whose local credit rating is satisfactory.

Write them a letter, offering the privilege of a charge account and emphasizing its advantages.

2. As cashier of the Mitchell Trust & Savings Bank, Mitchell, La., you have secured the names and addresses of new teachers to be employed in the local schools next fall. None of them is living in Mitchell at present.

Prepare a letter offering the facilities of your bank to these teachers. Make it both interesting and informative.

3. A customer of the Spencer Hardware Company, Madison, Maine, has just made the final payment on an electric refrigerator, which she purchased on the ten-payment plan. She made some of the payments in advance and none late.

Write her a letter of appreciation and call her attention to other electrical merchandise which she may purchase on the same plan.

4. As proprietor of the Holmes Business College, Clifton, Pa., you have just received the signed enrolment blank of Mervin Bristol, Goudat, Pa., who wishes to study bookkeeping and shorthand. He writes that he is a graduate of the Goudet High School and that he has selected your school because he plans to live with his older brother, a bank cashier in Clifton.

Write a letter to welcome Mr. Bristol and give him such information concerning your school and the year's activities as in your opinion he should have.

5. Mrs. Elizabeth Fox, who has been a good charge customer of one of the leading department stores of your city for over fifteen years, has not used her account now for six months. From reliable sources, you, the store's assistant credit manager, have learned that she was, and probably still is, very much disappointed in the service which she received at your last annual clearance sale when your firm's clerks were swamped with an unusually large amount of business, which prevented them from giving the usual prompt attention to old customers. There will not be another clearance sale for about a year.

Formulate a plan whereby your firm may revive Mrs. Fox's account; then write her accordingly.

6. Frank Ferch, 8 Millikan Drive, Bryan, Tenn., who has been a steady subscriber to *Nature Magazine* (or some other with which you are familiar), for eight years, recently failed to renew his subscription.

As assistant to the subscription manager of *Nature Magazine*, which is published in Washington, D. C., write your subscriber to ascertain the reason for his failure to renew. You happen to know that Mr. Ferch is an ardent bird lover, for your magazine has published several sketches from his pen dealing with bird life.

7. As owner of a gas service station, you have just compiled a list of customers who have not had any purchases charged against their accounts for three months.

Prepare a series of three letters which will prompt them to use their accounts again.

8. Draft a "thank you" letter to the purchasing agent of a local telephone company, who has just placed a second order for ten Duro typewriters with your firm. It calls for immediate delivery. The first order for three machines was filled five months ago.
9. Assume that you are a well-established photographer in a medium-sized town. You have just learned that Mr. and Mrs. Carl Plath, prominent local citizens as well as your loyal customers, will celebrate their golden wedding anniversary next Monday.

Prepare a message of congratulation for them.

10. As owner of an exclusive riding academy, prepare a Christmas or a New Year's letter for your patrons.

### LETTERS FOR STUDY AND FOR REVISION

11. A form letter to charge customers, with carefully filled-in name and with pen-and-ink signature, sent by an exclusive style shop for women. The printed questionnaire which accompanied the letter asked the following questions:

Have you ever had cause for disapproval of our service?

Have you any criticism of our merchandise to offer?

Is the salesperson who serves you helpful in every way?

Can you suggest anything that would make you happier when shopping here?

Other comments?

Dear Mrs. Franlick:

After several years as Manager of the Fagin Company's Ambassador Shop and general dress buyer for the southern division, I am now assuming the duties of General Manager for both the Ambassador and Hollywood Shops.

I am more than eager to be of service to you in my new capacity, and I hope you will very soon let me talk to you personally so that I may help you myself or see to it that you are given the most agreeable and appreciative attention.

I wish you would grant me the courtesy of your frank replies, favorable or otherwise, to the few enclosed questions, as I am so anxious to make any wrongs right and to enlarge the scope of the right things.

The enclosed envelope requires no postage. Your comments will, of course, be treated confidentially and I will more than appreciate your coöperation.

Sincerely yours,

12. A so-called reminder letter to charge customers whose accounts are dormant. It brought good results. What improvements would you make in this letter?

Dear Sir:

You have a charge account at this store for two very good reasons:

1. because you are the kind of man whose name we want on our books
2. because we believe you like our kind and quality of goods.

So far, however, you have not used your account. We should like to have your name on the books. The enthusiastic commendations of

over twelve thousand customers convince us more than ever that you, too, will like the store, the merchandise, and the values here.

Please come in and give us a trial soon.

Yours very truly,

13. The following is a form letter, which was multigraphed on a half sheet. What are its outstanding weak and strong qualities? Enumerate them.

#### BALTIMORE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION:

As outstanding National Wholesalers and Distributors to the Furniture Dealers for the past 35 years, it has always been our policy to extend the TEACHERS ASSOCIATIONS the courtesy of purchasing Home Furnishings at WHOLESALE prices.

This courtesy previously was extended for CASH Purchases only but due to a change in our policy we can now extend favorable CREDIT TERMS in addition to allowing you to take advantage of Wholesale prices as heretofore.

We have recently opened a Retail Department, but you will be taken care of as formerly through the WHOLESALE Department. Our Baltimore House affords one of the finest displays of Home Furnishings, representing the very best in FURNITURE, FLOOR COVERINGS and DRAPERIES.

We are enclosing a Card of Identification. Kindly present this card AT THE DOOR to facilitate your account being handled thru our WHOLESALE DEPARTMENT. Also in order that you may receive the Wholesale prices accorded Members of your Association.

Yours very truly,

14. A neatly "personalized" form letter used by a man's clothing store.

Dear Sir:

It has pleased us greatly to know that you were in our store recently and we trust the merchandise you purchased meets with your approval.

Harris & Hill is built upon the principle of giving complete satisfaction in both merchandise and service. Should we at any time fail to be in harmony with the spirit which we desire shall characterize our business relations, we will appreciate the courtesy if you will kindly inform us.

Anticipating the pleasure of your further calls, and assuring you of our appreciation of your patronage, we are

Yours very truly,

15. Three carefully filled-in form letters used with good results by a high-grade apparel store a month apart for accounts which have been dormant twelve months. Letters two and three are, of course, not sent if letter one has brought an answer.

Cite reasons as to why in your opinion these letters brought satisfactory response.

### A

Dear Miss Huntley:

Old friends are one's real friends and when an old friend stops coming to see you, you wonder what has happened.

Your charge account shows, Miss Huntley, that you have not visited us recently. Has anything happened to disturb your faith in us? Have you experienced any dissatisfaction with our goods, our prices, our service? If there be any shortcoming on our part, please tell us about it, for we are most eager to correct the cause and have a valued old friend with us again.

We shall be ever so grateful for a reply—just use the reverse side of this letter.

Cordially yours,

### B

Dear Miss Huntley:

Few stores in this country have had so large a number of successive generations for their loyal customers as are revealed by the records of Hoover & Hoover.

We attribute this fact largely to the soundness of the fundamental policies initiated in the early days of this business by its founders and our adherence down through the years to these principles. For instance, our staff of buyers is carrying out faithfully the old standard by which new merchandise was judged. The question is not "Will this sell readily?" but "Is our selection the 'last word' in originality, style, invention, design and workmanship; is quality accompanied by moderate price; will it give you the after-purchase service to which you are entitled?"

It is doubly important to us, now that our new store is being built, to know if you have had reason to be dissatisfied with any branch of our service despite our conscientious efforts to carry out the policy outlined above.

Will you not write us, Miss Huntley,—just use the back of this letter—we are so anxious to have you with us again?

Cordially yours,



## C.

Dear Miss Huntley:

Merely offering merchandise for sale and collecting money in exchange for it, is a primitive conception of business service, and, to our way of thinking, constitutes only a small part of what the customer is entitled to receive.

Upholding the traditions of the founders of this business, we desire each sale here to be also significant of:

Pleasure	Satisfaction
Courtesy	Good-will
Friendliness	Confidence
Individual Interest	Unselfish Service.

If in any transaction here you have missed any of these elements, then we are at fault and sincerely desire to make amends.

We are keenly disappointed that we have not received an answer to our previous letters respectfully inquiring your reason for no longer using your charge account. So deeply concerned are we, Miss Huntley, that we send you this additional appeal to advise us of the reason for no longer giving us the privilege of serving you. We feel that something has occurred to cause you dissatisfaction. We know we can make a satisfactory adjustment if you will but let us have the facts.

Cordially yours,

## CHAPTER XIV

### DIRECT MAIL SELLING

#### *Characteristics and Advantages*

By direct mail selling is meant the sending of letters, booklets, broadsides, folders, blotters, post cards, house magazines, and catalogues to prospective customers or customers, either to sell them directly or else to prepare the way for selling. Used first by mail-order houses, sales promotion by mail has in recent years assumed truly huge proportions so that for a time it ranked second in the total advertising expenditure of American business, being exceeded only by newspaper advertising. There is probably no business that has not at some time or other used direct mail selling in some form, and there are thousands that use various forms of it year in and year out. Some mail-order houses depend solely on matter sent by post for sales promotion.

Above all else direct mail selling is flexible. A processed sales letter may be sent to fifty prospects or to fifty thousand. Its sender, moreover, controls the form and the message of the letter or other kind of direct mail. He is not restrained by the policy of a newspaper, a magazine, or a radio—does not have to sign contracts with them, but can handle the campaign entirely himself. The only limitations are those placed by the post office department upon size and shape of mail matter, and its nature—that it shall not be fraudulent or obscene.

A distinct advantage of direct mail is its personal appeal, which may be the reason why that particular form of it exerting the strongest personal influence—the sales letter—is the most widely used. Whereas newspaper, magazine, billboard, street car, and radio advertising make mass appeals, direct mail makes individual appeals. It is usually, though by no means always, intended for a person known to have use for the seller's wares.

Undoubtedly the reason for the popularity of direct mail is found in both the ease and the small cash outlay with which its various forms may be used. Business men who are disinclined to spend large sums of money on newspaper or radio advertising often are easily persuaded to give direct mail a trial. However, the advantage of a comparatively small expenditure which such mail necessitates, has resulted in the production of so much

that is worthless, that some business men frown the moment direct mail is mentioned to them. Nevertheless, owing to its directness, low total cost, flexibility, and adaptability, various forms of direct mail will always be used as important advertising and selling media. The recent advent of faster and cheaper air mail has increased the use of direct mail, especially letters, appreciably.

Success in the use of letters, booklets, catalogues, and the like follows upon a thorough knowledge of the market, and also of the comparative merits of various types of advertising and selling. Far too many letter campaigns are the result of superficial planning. The disappointing returns which they yield are blamed on the mode of selling and not, as they should be, on the incompetence of the user of that mode. The planning and the execution of a worth while direct mail campaign require the knowledge and skill of a specialist. So long therefore as an army of amateurs tries its hand at preparing such campaigns, so long will the mails be flooded with useless advertising matter. As a rule, such efforts are seriously checked by periods of business decline—when many firms stop most of their advertising.

The cost of direct mail matter may vary from a few cents for a processed letter to several dollars for an expensive catalogue or book. Of all forms of advertising it has the highest cost per unit of circulation, though the total cost of a campaign may be relatively small. The returns from direct mail are from 2 to 3 per cent on ordinary offers; 5 per cent is regarded as high. In special cases as high as 25 and 50 per cent returns have been scored, but usually such exceptional returns are secured only by offering a gift or a premium of considerable value with each bona fide order.

### *Purposes*

The purposes of all direct mail selling, in addition to the generating of good-will, are mainly two: to sell a product or a service by mail or else to "educate" the prospect sufficiently so that a sale may more easily be made by a salesman. Mail-order firms make it their business to concentrate on the first aim. Their sales letters, booklets, and catalogues are often masterpieces of direct mail selling owing to the great care exercised in their conception and execution. Correspondence schools also, and magazine publishers, department, or other stores endeavor to sell direct by mail since often it is cheaper and more convenient for them to do so, though not always more satisfactory to the customer.

The types of merchandise and service successfully sold by mail cover

a wide range indeed. Usually, however, the more intricate a product is in construction and the more subject to adjustment and repair, the less likely is it to be sold by mail. A case in point is that of an implement maker who failed in his endeavor to dispose of agricultural machinery through the mail. Though this firm's catalogues, letters, order blanks, and booklets were very explicit, there were always farmers who misunderstood instructions or who wanted more detailed explanations. The consequent volume of correspondence became so heavy and so costly that after five years' operation on the mail order plan, the firm decided to place the sale of the implements in the hands of strategically located dealers, who could personally explain the operations of a tractor or the advantages of a gas engine to the farmer, and whose service men could, if necessary, make the repairs.

No inclusive classification of goods and services sold wholly by mail can be given for the simple reason that the changing nature of many kinds of goods necessitates corresponding changes in selling methods. Specialty rather than convenience goods lend themselves to selling by mail since they are purchased only by certain groups of persons. Their talking points are often highly individual so that it requires both concentrated and repeated effort to convince the prospect of their validity. But the number of specialty goods advertised and sold only through the mail is relatively small.

It is in the performance of its second main function—smoothing the way for the sale—that direct mail selling finds its widest application, for here its use may be closely allied with newspaper, magazine, and radio advertising, as well as with personal salesmanship. Inquiries obtained through coupon advertising in magazines are carefully segregated and followed up by means of a series of letters with suitable enclosures. Frequently the purpose of these letters is so to impress the inquirer with the value (to him personally) of the product that he will ask for it at the local store, thus simplifying the dealer's selling task. Life insurance companies turn the "leads" received from general magazine and newspaper advertising over to their agents, who follow them up with letters and booklets prepared by experts. Manufacturers and wholesalers go so far as to furnish retailers—their customers—with ready-to-use direct mail campaign material designed to bring customers into stores. A firm selling cash registers regularly mails every salesman's prospects carefully written letters, timing their despatch so that they will arrive between the salesman's calls. These letters are based on information furnished in the salesman's reports. They answer specific objections, reemphasize certain sales

features, thus lightening the salesman's load perceptibly. An automobile distributor sends owners of old models pertinent information about the latest models by means of "personalized" folders. In these and other ways direct mail helps to remove sales resistance. Each application of direct mail brings its own problems, which can be solved only after careful experimentation, since no two mail campaigns are alike in important particulars.

### *Appeals Used*

Since the ultimate aim of all direct mail advertising and selling is to secure favorable response—profitable action—its user should understand the intelligent application of certain more or less helpful psychological principles. He should know that a person buys either because his reasoning tells him that it is the proper thing to do or because his feelings urge him on. Whenever the action is the result of reasoning, it is preceded by periods of deliberation, during which the pros and cons of the contemplated action are weighed. The length of this deliberation depends on the personal significance of the intended action—in direct mail selling on the amount of money which the buyer must pay out and the advantages he gains thereby, as well as on the number of other offers made him. This address to the reasoning intelligence is often called the long-circuit appeal. On the other hand, if the action is prompted by feeling, there is no deliberation or hesitation—it is instantaneous. In this case we have the so-called short-circuit appeal. The owner of a new house insures it against fire and other hazards because his common sense tells him that it is a rational and practical way of guarding against future loss. After a time he sells the property to someone who through indifference lets the insurance policy lapse. But when a fire destroys a neighboring dwelling, the new owner becomes so frightened that he immediately and without further thought proceeds to renew the lapsed policy. In the one case we have deliberative, in the other, instinctive action.

For a complete treatment of the long- and the short-circuit appeals, the reader may consult any standard work on the psychology of advertising and selling. Suffice it here to say that an instinct may be compared to an explosive chemical. A strong appeal to an instinct is the lighted fuse that sets off the explosion—that rouses the feelings which in turn induce the action. Thus, in the illustration just cited, the neighbor's fire furnished such a strong stimulus to the sense of fear as to prompt an immediate expression of that stimulus in corresponding action not motivated by reason.

Among the so-called instincts are those pertaining to food, clothing, and shelter; hunting, hoarding, fighting, sex, play, fashion, curiosity, and many other modes of human behavior which satisfy desire. Whether a piece of direct mail should be addressed to the reason or to the emotions, or both, depends on a number of important factors, such as the type of prospective purchaser, the type of goods or service sold, its complexity, its price, the prospect's familiarity with the goods, the amount of competition, and others.

Most people are bundles of emotions, who, as they get older, learn from experience and who reason to no very great extent—a sad but true commentary on man's mental life. The extent of deliberation used varies with age, sex, training, occupation, environment, nationality, habits, and other conditions. Direct mail matter addressed to young people, who are governed largely by feelings, is usually based on the short-circuit appeal as is also that addressed to women, whose chief concern for generations—the care of home and children—has tended to develop their feeling capacity to a marked extent. The training or education of the prospective purchaser should also be taken into consideration, since generally speaking the actions of uneducated persons are largely governed by prejudices and other feelings. A valuable clue as to whether the reason-why or the emotional appeal should be used is given by a man's occupation. Thus, in eight out of ten cases, a professional engineer or any man maintaining habitually a scientific attitude of mind is likely to take time and care before making decisions, whereas a professional musician or actor is likely to decide a matter on the spur of the moment. In all this consideration it should be kept in mind that few, if any, persons rely on reasoning alone when they buy. Even the hard-headed executive bent on the utmost economy and efficiency may be reached by an ingenious appeal to flattery. There are many people, however, who buy almost solely in response to instinctive stimuli. It would seem that under ordinary conditions a mixed appeal, consisting of both long- and short-circuit copy, is best. What the proportions of this mixture should approximately be, the writer-salesman can determine only after studying the age, nationality, education, occupation, environment, habits, and other matters pertaining to his readers. It would be absurd to base mainly on the reason-why appeal a series of letters designed to sell a course in advertising to young clerks who are recent high school and college graduates, or mainly on the emotional appeal one in dancing.

Often the type of goods or service to be marketed should determine the choice of the dominant appeal. Under ordinary conditions the sale

of foods, clothing, jewelry, cosmetics, musical instruments, books, and gifts to the consumer is best promoted by the emotional appeal, whereas instruments of various kinds, labor-saving machinery used in office, shop, or home, as well as building and construction supplies are best marketed by means of the reason-why appeal. But these are merely suggestions which should not be followed blindly, since other considerations affect the choice of appeal.

First among these considerations is price. Ordinarily, the higher the price of an article the more reasons must be advanced to induce buying. A person asked to pay out more money than the customary amount for a piece of goods will want to know the why and the wherefore, will want to consider the purchase carefully. On the other hand, a person asked to pay much less than the customary amount will hardly hesitate. That is the reason why bargain sales—bargain offers—they abound in selling by mail—are usually little more than short-circuit appeals. That is why odd and low prices such as \$0.98, \$3.98, and \$4.95 suggest the saving of money so strongly as sometimes to become irresistible urges to immediate action. As a matter of fact, such prices not infrequently represent mark-ups, not mark-downs!

There is practically no kind of merchandise or service in the sale of which the something-for-nothing lure cannot be effectively utilized. Some magazines circularize their prospects by means of cheaply processed letters and circulars, offering trial subscriptions at less than half the usual rate. Insurance companies send bill folds, stamped in gold with the prospect's name, free of charge merely for the return of a bit of information. Banks mail deposit books, offering to start a new savings account with a one-dollar deposit to induce new patronage. Investment houses extend their prospects the privilege of free security information service if they will only respond to their direct mail appeals.

Price in relation to the competitor's or to prevailing prices also determines the nature of the appeal. If it is higher, the difference must be explained, as already mentioned. If it is lower, it suggests the saving of money, which in itself may cause prompt buying action. Convenient terms of payment bait many unthinking persons, who fail to take into consideration the high interest and service charges made on the automobile, house, refrigerator, suit of clothes, or other purchase. Sets of expensive books, radios, and correspondence courses have been effectively sold by mail on the strength mainly of "Make your own terms of payment!"

The prospect's familiarity with the product, its complexity, and the amount of present competition in the field are other important items

business, territory, nature and quality of merchandise or service sold, competition, desirability from the viewpoint of the purchaser, the probable number of such purchasers, the unit sale, the average annual sales to each customer, and the margin of profit. It aims at determining the past and the present selling cost, the seasonableness of sales, the prospect's familiarity with the product. And after the direct mail specialist has utilized all his past experience, his knowledge of product and market, he plans a specific number of mailings over a definite period of time. The power of direct mail selling is so great that if the analysis and the plan are reasonably sound, the chances for success will be reasonably good, provided, of course, the nature of the business is such as to justify the use of this form of selling.

Failure in direct mail is often caused by lack of information concerning the business using this form of advertising. Many a manufacturer, if asked how the price and the quality of his product compare with those of his competitor's, will say that while the prices are just about the same, the quality of *his* goods is superior. He flatters himself into this belief, which if it were based on fact should make him the leader in his field. Likewise, many a retailer does not know how many accounts on his books are active and how many dormant.

Careful analysis of profitable and unprofitable consumer accounts will show the volume of sales necessary to make an account worth carrying, the probable value of a new account, and the amount of advertising outlay required to secure it. Further examination will reveal the territory which offers the least sales resistance and the type of prospect who will be the most likely buyer. If a thorough study of the market has disclosed consumers or dealers to whom the seller's wares would be useful, and if a reliable list of their names and addresses can be obtained, then direct mail may be applied to cultivate the new market. As to whether it *should* be applied depends on past experience with a similar market, on the nature and the extent of competition to be fought, the minimum and average units of sale to be made, and on the frequency with which repeat business may be expected. Taking into consideration the type of prospect to be sold and the purpose of the campaign—whether it is to secure inquiries or orders—the number and the kind of mailing units are determined. Only after all these data have been assembled and correlated is the actual copy written. It is the copy, however, that is the most important part of any form of advertising. When this is done, the processing or printing of the various pieces is begun. The mailing on schedule time completes the job.

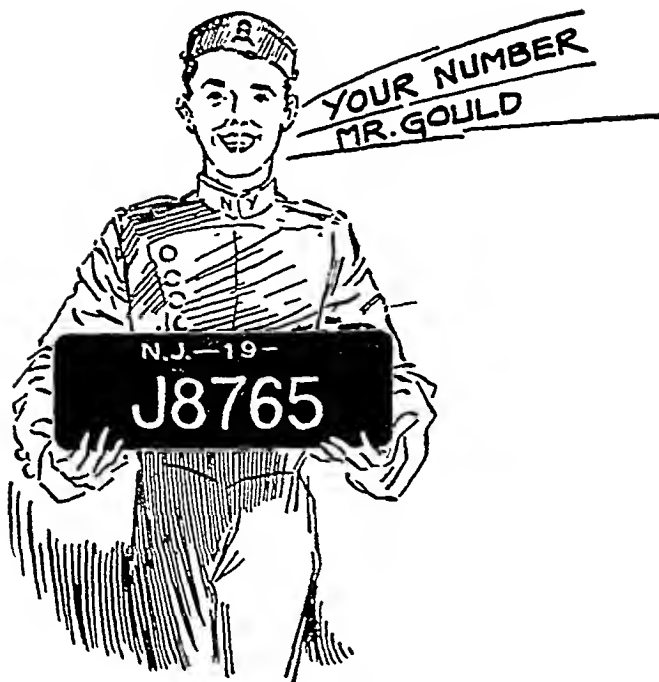
To visualize somewhat more clearly the importance of planning direct



mail matter, let us look into a successful campaign, which was mapped out and written in five days for a Pacific Coast hatchery. The product is baby chicks, approximately two millions a year. The territory, eleven western states, owing to the time limit in shipping live chicks. The prospects, poultrymen. Orders are obtained largely by mail. Two types of advertising were decided upon—magazine and direct mail. The basic theme of the entire campaign was "Reducing the poultryman's costs and increasing his profits," one that was of great importance to all poultry producers whose business almost without exception had suffered greatly from a two-year depression. More efficient management of poultry farms and higher quality breeding stock were regarded as the only solution to the average poultryman's problems. Since six advertisements, repeated once, were to be inserted in poultry and farm periodicals to secure leads and six small colored folders were to be used as follow-ups, the main theme was divided into six sub-themes, after consultation with the service department of the hatchery, whose function it is to keep in touch with the customer not only before but also after the sale. The topics ran as follows: breeding; hatching and shipping; brooding; feeding; culling; housing and managing.

Each represented an important phase of the prospective customer's business, since failure in a single one might seriously reduce his income. Each advertisement was provided with a coupon reading: "Please send me free of charge and without any obligation your new illustrated baby chick folders." The names received were segregated by states, placed on prospect lists, and followed up at stated intervals by means of folders accompanied by sales letters, price lists, and stamped reply cards. Since the advertisements were to bring inquiries, their copy emphasized the advantages of the hatchery's service department, not the baby chicks. Conversely, since the folders were to bring orders, the product—baby chicks—was put first and service afterwards. There was a close tie-up between the messages in the advertisements and those in the folders. Thus an advertisement would attempt to answer the question: "How can I cut my feed costs?" by saying, "Let our experts solve your poultry problems!", and the corresponding folder would answer in more detail to the effect that "You can reduce feed costs by raising chicks from high-producing stock!", enumerating the various reasons. The follow-up matter, which went largely into rural districts, was simple and straightforward in its appeal, no attempt being made to personalize folders or letters, which were sent by third-class mail.

An interesting variation of the usual planning of direct mail campaigns is followed by a manufacturer of household appliances, who is guided by



NOTE: The personalization of the recipient's name in the balloon is a patented feature.

## HOTEL NEW YORKER

THIRTY-FOURTH STREET AT EIGHTH AVENUE, NEW YORK

November 7th, 19-

WE HAVE YOUR NUMBER MR. GOULD;

And now we'd like to have your signature on the register of The HOTEL NEW YORKER. We'd like you here for we KNOW you'll like it here....you'll find it pleasant, economical and convenient.

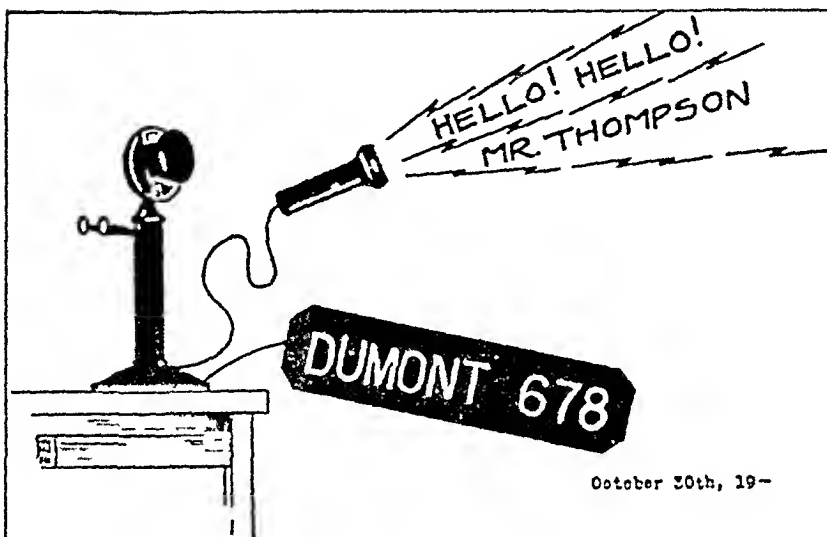
TWENTY-FIVE HUNDRED rooms--all outside, each with bath, shower, radio and Servidor. Priced from \$3.!! Four exceptional restaurants with varied menus to fit every purse and palate.

Garage adjacent, attendant takes your car and delivers it ....no parking irritation.

We have a very useful map for you...all about New York City ...shows most direct routes, how to get any place, avoid traffic, etc. It's FREE---just sign and return the enclosed postal (pay no postage).

Cordially,

*Ralph King* President



October 30th, 19--

KNOWING YOUR  
TELEPHONE NUMBER  
MR. THOMPSON -

WE'D like to pick up our phone and tell you all the good things about The Hotel NEW YORKER. We'd like to urge you to step into your car and "step on it".....driving directly to our city and hotel.

WANT you to try The NEW YORKER, want you to notice how different it is from other hotels! How it just seems to sparkle with courtesy and service. The NEW YORKER is the largest hotel in New York City with its twenty-five hundred rooms! Because of its great size it CAN GIVE MORE FOR LESS!! Rooms are ALL outside, each has a shower, a bath, a radio and a convenient Servidor. Rooms are delightfully furnished and spacious and PRICED FROM \$3. to \$5.1

CONVENIENTLY located...near EVERYTHING. Ideal for motorists from Jersey - - - thru' the Holland Tunnel or over the Ferry---up the Elevated Highway---off at 23rd Street---over 3 blocks to Eighth Avenue---then 11 blocks to 34th Street AND THE NEW YORKER. No complications, very little traffic, ample parking space and a garage nearby. BY TRAIN...The New Yorker is connected directly with the Pennsylvania Terminal by underground passage!

HERE'S everything you desire in a hotel....won't you make this your New York home?

AWAITING-U,

*Alfred H. H.*  
President

HOTEL NEW YORKER

FIFTY EIGHTH STREET AT EIGHTH AVENUE NEW YORK

INGENIOUSLY PERSONALIZED DIRECT MAIL

probable returns. Thus, in the case of a three-piece campaign to 10,000 merchants, or 30,000 separate appeals, he estimates a 2 per cent return, which means that 600 of these merchants will each place an order for one dozen household appliances. The selling margin is \$1.50 per unit, \$18 per dozen, or a total of \$10,800. In appealing to the merchants, this manufacturer offers to circularize over their names two hundred of their local prospects with a three-piece direct mail series or a total of six hundred mailings, postage on which is paid by the merchants. Estimating 2 per cent as the minimum return, this percentage, or twelve orders, will sell the merchant's supply of one dozen appliances so that he will have to re-order from the manufacturer, whose selling expense on this repeat business is only a fraction of that on the original order. The total cost of this direct mail campaign is \$10,200, of which \$450 pays 1½ cents postage on 30,000 mailings to 10,000 merchants and \$9,750 pays the total cost of 390,000 mailing pieces at 2½ cents apiece, consisting of 30,000 appeals (of three each to 10,000) to merchants plus 360,000 appeals to merchants' customers (600 each for 600 merchants). Thus the actual cost (\$10,200) leaves a generous margin over the estimated cost of \$10,800.

### An Ingeniously Personalized Direct Mail Campaign

The letters which are illustrated on pages 307 and 308 and which were sent by the Hotel New Yorker to a list of 1,100 persons in New Jersey have very strong attention value. The first carries the recipient's telephone number; the second carries his automobile license number, besides the usual patented name fill-in in the balloon. With the second letter a post card was enclosed, which, after making allowance for bad addresses, brought a total response of 15 per cent.

In submitting this excellent two-piece campaign, Harry Latz Service, Inc., who originated it, commented: "How many people have stopped at the hotel or will stop is hard to determine, but the post card responses received prove the persuasiveness of these two letters."

*PRICE*

(Mark with "x") .... High .... Low .... Moderate .... Not basis of sale.  
Do you aim to sell the best for the price, the best at any price, or the  
cheapest? .....

Special offers used in the past or contemplated? .....

Is there anything outstanding about your terms of sale, credit, or discount?  
.....

*SERVICE*

Delivery of goods? (Check with "x") By mail .. by freight .. by express ..  
by wagon .. over counter .. C.O.D. .. Is promptness a part of service? ....

Describe your facilities for filling orders promptly .....

Describe your shipping facilities .....

*GUARANTEE*

Do you guarantee? consign? allow? exchange? refund money? Describe fully  
.....

Is your service made better by any advantages of location? Explain .....

How is your service different from or better than your competitors'? .....

*DIRECT MAIL MATTER TO BE PREPARED*

To be directed to the trade or to the consumer? .....

To delinquent customers? present customers? prospective customers? If mail-  
ings are going to more than one class, state proportion of each class .....

Purpose of mailings? — to help salesmen? to bring inquiries? to bring orders  
in response to a definite offer? .....

*MAILING LIST*

Its sources? ..... General character of recipients of  
advertising? ..... City or country dwellers? .....

Special or general class? .....

*GOODS OR SERVICE TO BE FEATURED in—(Make suggestions specific)*

January ..... July .....

February ..... August .....

March ..... September .....

April ..... October .....

May ..... November .....

June ..... December .....

Please give special instructions or make suggestions regarding form or style  
of copy to be used in campaign. ....

address and of occupation, making a total of 59 per cent changes. At the Chicago post office alone, removal notices not long ago ran close to 700,000 a year. In revising its entire mailing list, an eastern department store dropped 150,000 names as worthless. It is estimated that the average mailing list has at least 10 per cent dead wood in it. A manufacturer of mining equipment sent expensive catalogues to the officials of firms, which, unknown to him, had been consolidated, with the result that the chief purchasing agent of the consolidated company received, in addition to his own copy, twenty-four other copies! This wasteful mailing was the result of relying on a mailing list which had not been revised for several years.

Mailing lists may be purchased or compiled. In the former case, one should make sure that the seller guarantees not only the accuracy of the names and addresses, but also their quality—and that his guarantee is good. By sending mail matter to a small portion of the list, one can soon determine whether or not the list has these characteristics. Among the 7,143 mailing lists offered in the catalogue of a firm specializing in the sale of lists may be found those of specialty salesmen, sales managers, canvassers, baby chick hatcheries, installment jewelers, golf club members, millionaires, and millionaire widows. For many firms, the names and addresses of their cash and their credit customers furnish the most productive lists. Some prefer to compile their own lists of prospects from customer and letter files. Present customers make the best lists. A discussion of other common sources used for this purpose follows:

1. *Advertising.* Names are secured from coupons, reply cards, requests for samples, booklets, and catalogues. In order to get names of good prospects, the advertiser often asks the inquirer to send money in payment for samples and for mailing expenses. The quality of names obtained from advertising varies also with the particular medium employed.

2. *Directories.* Telephone, city, financial, manufacturers', professional, and others. Thus a list of local surgeons may be compiled from the classified section of the telephone directory, one of surgeons throughout the country from the medical directory. Lists of persons residing in a certain locality may readily be assembled from a city directory.

3. *Official records.* Vital statistics (births, marriages, divorces, deaths, naturalizations), automobile registration lists, tax lists, building permits, mortgage files, new businesses, and bankruptcies furnish many names of use to direct mail advertisers.

4. *Membership rosters.* Schools, churches, clubs of all kinds, lodges, business and professional societies are excellent sources of prospects for certain kinds of merchandise and service.

To ensure the accuracy of a mailing list, it should be checked at regular intervals. Lists of retail charge customers are usually checked against those maintained by the credit department, which keeps in constant touch with this class of buyers. The publication of new telephone, city, and other directories as well as the issuance of revised club and society rosters signal the revision of many a mailing list. In the case of city and other directories which are published but once a year, many changes occur *between* dates of publication. The post office will usually undertake the checking of names and addresses in return for a nominal fee and will perform this important task during spare time carefully, though not always speedily. If a list is not too large, it is good practice to mail at suitable intervals a form letter or card to every name appearing on it, asking its owner to check the address used by the firm and also to indicate his probable interest in the firm's product and his probable desire for its advertising matter. In this way the mailing list is being purged continually.

The length of time for which the name of a prospect is kept on a mailing list varies with the nature of the business, the type of prospect, and the general selling policy. A firm selling its merchandise through canvassers drops names of prospective canvassers from its lists if they do not reply within three months from the date on which the first direct mail solicitation has been sent them. An insurance agent, on the other hand, does not remove a name from his list until he has definite information that the possessor of it is no longer in the market for insurance. A firm selling factory equipment will remove the name of a prospect only after it has received from him in answer to a form questionnaire, a statement to the effect that he is no longer interested. A nursery firm sends prospects to whom last year's catalogue was mailed but who have failed to order, a double post card, the return portion of which is a request for the new catalogue. Prospects who do not return the reply card are dropped from the mailing list, which is thus revised once a year.

### *Forms of Direct Mail*

To list and to treat in detail the various forms of direct mail would require far more space than is available here. For this reason only a brief summary of their outstanding characteristics, advantages, and purposes will be given here.

According to the objectives to be attained, direct mail may be classified as follows:

2 per cent. Expertly written letters sent at the right time have occasionally brought ten times that many returns. Intelligent repetition and pleasing variety should be the outstanding principles applying to the use of sales letters. It is not the first, but the repeat order which, ordinarily, brings the profit; therefore letters must be sent again and again. To keep letters producing returns, their appearance and message must be varied. Such changes of pace often bring unexpected results. For details concerning the writing of the sales letter and for illustrative examples of it, the reader is referred to Chapter XV, "Sales Letters."

### *Four-Page Letters*

If, for the adequate telling of a sales story, personal touch and a detailed written or pictorial description, or both, are necessary, then the four-page letter is the logical medium. It is a single sheet, 11" x 17", folded into four pages, each measuring 8½" x 11". Because the four-page letter combines the functions of both letter and broadside, letter and leaflet, or letter and circular, it has been called the Siamese twins of advertising.

Usually the first and fourth pages contain the actual letter. Often the fourth page is left blank on the ground that a three-page message is sufficiently long, that many recipients never look at the back page, and that to place printed or other matter on it destroys the impression that the whole represents a more or less personal appeal. The inside pages, which usually present a detailed as well as illustrated description of the commodity or service to be sold, have the effect of a broadside.

The attractively executed piece of direct mail advertising, illustrated on the two following pages, proved to be a quick and efficient sales promoter, showing incidentally the wide variety of purposes for which the four-page illustrated letter may be used.

Many different types of firms use the four-page letter: an engineering firm interests contractors in its equipment by means of such a letter, its inside pages showing in word and picture how a certain job was effectively handled by the use of its machinery. A manufacturer of outboard motors answers inquiries from prospects by means of a colorful four-page letter. A chamber of commerce gives detailed information about its particular city and region to prospective settlers by means of a four-page letter. An exclusive fur house tells its customers about the newest fashions in furs by the same means.

The so-called *catalogue letter* is an interesting variation of the four-page letter. It differs from the latter in that its two inside pages are devoted to the reproduction of certain items in the catalogue in which a



# Everything a family longs for in a Country Home is found here . . . at beautiful

## "TWIN CHIMNEYS"

Do You Desire  
Charm, Privacy  
and Restful  
Spaciousness?

Of Course, but  
One Must Be Near  
"Civilization"

And Certainly,  
One Must Have  
Modern  
Conveniences

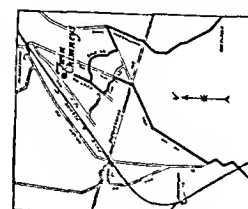
"TWIN CHIMNEYS" is in the clean, sweet country air of Meadowbrook, Pa. The scenic beauty is actually inspiring, reminding one with its trim lawns and well kept, imposing homes of the English country land and the dignity of the aristocratic tradition. Here is indeed the perfect retreat from the noise, the dirt, the incessant clamor of the money minded city.

When you're minded for business, for shopping, for gayety, your car speeds on splendid roads to the city's markets and amusements in less than half an hour. Meadowbrook Station, with frequent trains to Philadelphia, is less than five minutes' walk. Table necessities and other comforts come daily from the city or nearby Jenkintown.

You will lack for nothing in modern conveniences. There is pure Spring field running water, electric current for house and garage, telephone connection—every device of 20th century plumbing and sanitation. The house is warmed by an up-to-date hot water heating system. Several good country clubs are near for golf, tennis, bridge, dancing.

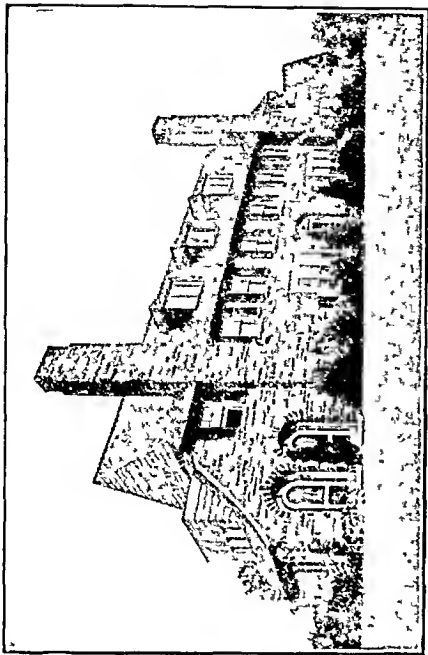
The surrounding properties are occupied by families of breeding and refinement—cultivated, likable people whom you will be glad to know socially. There is no undesirable element. The locality exudes the atmosphere of pleasant, placid home life, of being an agreeable place to live in.

*There is in fact nothing lacking to  
make this dwelling the Ideal Home*

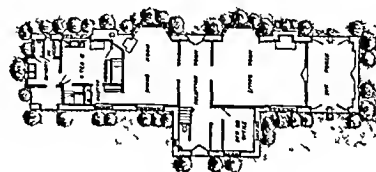


### How to Reach "Twin Chimneys"

- (1) By auto out Old York Road to Queens Hill, turn right on Mifflin Road to Mifflin Road on N. H. Road drive north to Centre Road. On Centre Road turn right on Mifflin Road. The house is on the left. Distance from Centre Road to Mifflin Road is about 30 m. miles.
- (2) By auto out Rosewood Boulevard to R. & G. San Avenue drive a south on R. & G. San Avenue to Hunt station. From Hunt station take the train to C. & D. Road then north to Twin Chimneys. The house is on the left. Distance from Hunt station to Twin Chimneys is about 30 minutes.
- (3) By Road on R. & G. San Avenue to Meadowbrook. Turn on with south on Meadowbrook Road to Centre Road and C. & D. Road (Centre Road). Turn about 55 m. miles by train to Jenkintown on 10th.



"TWIN CHIMNEYS"—On N. H. Road and C. & D. Road, Meadowbrook, Pa.



**T**HE residence is on a 1 1/2-acre plot, fronting on two streets. House size 85 x 21, irregular.

On the first floor the dwelling has reception hall, den or office, large dining room, living room, kitchen, parlor, laundry and refrigerator room—and a sun porch. Seven large rooms, two open fireplaces.

Second floor—Large front bed room or sitting room, with open fire place, three additional bed rooms, and sewing room or nursery. Between each two bed rooms there is a bath room. Five large rooms, two bath rooms.

Third floor—Four bed rooms, two bath rooms, and an extra large cedar closet. Extra large closets connect with all rooms.

The basement has full cement floor and can be fitted up as an admirable amusement room. Two car garage, heated and lighted, with room for chauffeur's quarters above.

Price \$65,000. Immediate possession. Slight alterations to suit, with out additional charge. The house is now temporarily occupied by the owners and may be seen at your convenience or by telephone arrangement.

**ROY RANDALL -- Builder and Owner**  
Office 402 West Ave. Jenkintown  
Bell Phone, Ogontz 824  
Twin Chimneys, Phone  
Ogontz 3569

customer has shown interest. Thus, instead of answering all requests for quotations by sending a catalogue, which costs one dollar each, a certain manufacturer uses one or more four-page catalogue letters. In this way he can "lift" many pages from the catalogue and emphasize certain parts of his line of goods. On the first page of a catalogue letter, which has the regular letter-heading of the firm, appears the typed or processed reply to the inquiry, while the inside pages give in word and picture the catalogue items requested by prospect or customer.

### *Broadsides and Folders*

A broadside is a giant circular of varying size printed on heavy paper, folded, and sent without an envelope. On the face of the broadside may be a picture, slogan, or catch phrase to arouse curiosity. Thus begun, the sender's message is continued on the successive folds, where large type and sometimes pictures contribute to an easy comprehension of the entire message.

Size is the outstanding advantage of the broadside. Since it literally shouts its message, it is not used more than once or twice in a campaign: at the opening as a powerful bid for attention, and at the close as a final bid for action. If the broadside is to bring immediate action, a return card is attached to it. Dealers and other types of business men are usually the recipients of broadsides, which are seldom sent to consumers.

A *folder* may be defined as a magnified circular. The variations in the size and shape of the folder are innumerable. Thus, a small four-page leaflet or pamphlet as well as an elaborate twenty-four page time-table would fall within this classification. Folders may be used as separate mailing pieces; they may be enclosed in letters or in packages, or they may be made available in racks, as at hotels, railway stations, and travel bureaus. Their shape, typography, and illustrations are varied to suit reader, occasion, and subject. Some folders tell a complete sales story. Thus, a manufacturer of cigarette chests disposed of 804 at two dollars apiece by mailing 10,000 attractively illustrated four-page folders, 8½" x 11" in size, on the last page of which was printed a well-worded coupon. More often, however, the folder functions only as giver of information.

### *House Magazines*

An excellent example of continuous advertising and selling by mail is furnished by the house magazine. There are three distinct types: those sent to prospects to stimulate new business; those sent to salesmen to increase their daily efficiency; those distributed among office, store, or shop

employees to promote *esprit de corps*. Some house magazines are very unpretentious, multigraphed sheets containing but a few pages, whereas others are truly magazines—elaborately printed and profusely illustrated. Some are issued regularly; others only on special occasions, or when there is some money left over from the advertising appropriation. Many house magazines stop publication with the advent of business depressions.

The average reader of a house magazine wants useful information and some entertainment. He resents being preached to. He is likely to discard the magazine when the reading of it becomes a noticeable effort. The success of any house magazine hinges on reader interest. Its editor must give his readers not what he wants them to read but what *they would like* to read. Whatever sales talk appears in the magazine must be indirect. Reproductions of testimonials and of house advertisements should be used sparingly, if at all. The editorial policy must be carefully suited to the needs of the house and to the desires of the readers—not an easy task.

the way for the salesman's interview. Each card, printed in pleasing colors, bore a testimonial from a local business man, whose picture topped the message. In appearance these cards were neat and dignified. A building and loan association in a university town has increased its business very appreciably through the use of approximately twenty thousand postcards a year. Each series of cards varies in color, illustrations, and copy.

A type of card now widely used is the *business reply card*, which is issued on a government permit and which requires no stamp, its mailing cost being defrayed by the recipient. To draw attention, the color of a business reply card should be different from that of the advertising matter it accompanies. A dull manila card printed in black ink sent with a handsome booklet is not likely to prove resultful. The wording of the message on the card should be original and should exempt the sender from either expressed or implied obligation.

Apparently there is no clear-cut distinction between the terms folder, pamphlet, and booklet. The last mentioned is merely an advertising circular having four or more pages regardless of its size and binding. It may be a large book. The size and typographical scheme of the booklet vary with the length and the importance of the message it communicates. Few booklets seem complete without illustrated title pages designed to create a strong feeling of anticipation. Incidentally, the purpose of the cover, ordinarily used only on longer booklets, is, in addition to serving as a means of protection, very much the same as that of the title page. The typographical scheme of the whole should facilitate reading. The writer of a booklet must tell his story completely and, if possible, dramatically. His language must be well suited to the reader; his tone enthusiastic so as to gain the reader's confidence. In other words, he must provide informative as well as pleasant reading.

Thousands of booklets are distributed by mail in response to coupon advertising. When an insurance or automobile salesman calls on a prospect, he usually leaves a booklet or two. Manufacturers of office and household equipment furnish their dealers with booklets, rather than catalogues, for distribution among prospects. As a matter of fact, there is probably no type of merchandise or service which cannot be well described by means of the right sort of booklet.

### *Catalogues*

Most catalogues serve broad reference purposes. There are, however, exceptions. Sometimes a firm will issue a catalogue, often resembling a booklet, for the sole purpose of exploiting a single article. Implement

A fair test of the probable success of any direct mail campaign must be as nearly representative of the actual campaign as it is possible to make it. If the general mailing is made on Wednesday, the test mailing should be made on Wednesday. If the general mailing consists of letters without fill-ins, the test mailings should likewise have no fill-ins, and so on. A manufacturer contemplating a mail campaign selected twenty-five names of prospects from the pages of a trade paper in which he was advertising. To each he sent an individually typed letter, receiving in return six good inquiries. Heartened by this success, he immediately purchased a list of five hundred names of firms in the same field, to which he sent the same letter except that this time it was multigraphed. The campaign was almost a total failure. The test which he made was not a fair one because his sample list of names was not representative of the general list, and also because he first used typewritten and then multigraphed letters. Every factor likely to affect returns should be made the same in the test and in the general campaign, from the kind of sales appeal used to the signature and the postage.

The size of the test mailing should vary with that of the general mailing. If the list contains five hundred names, a satisfactory test mailing would probably be fifty. On a list of ten thousand names, a trial of one thousand would no doubt give a reasonably accurate forecast. Before despatching a million pieces, a firm made a test mailing of fifteen thousand copies of each of the six letters to be used, selecting names of persons whose buying habits were typical of those of the entire list. Only through experience can the user of direct mail tell how large the test mailing should be in a particular instance to insure a correct forecast. By varying certain features, such as beginning and closing paragraphs, general appeal, fill-ins, signatures, letter-headings, paper stock, envelopes, postage, etc., and by carefully recording returns, he can over a period of time accumulate valuable information which will serve as an efficient guide to successful direct mail planning.

A mail-order house depending solely on direct mail precedes every important campaign with adequate tests on the ground that not even an experienced direct mail specialist can sit in his office and guess accurately how a certain sales appeal will affect a large group of people. In building up its business to the present large proportions, this firm ascertained by means of tests which particular items in its line would sell most readily and could therefore be used as leads, in what sizes, and at what prices and times they should be offered. Furthermore, it had to learn through experience what kind of sales appeal and what kind of mailing pieces to use, and,

## A TYPICAL BLANK USED FOR RECORDING RETURNS FROM DIRECT MAIL CAMPAIGNS

## CHAPTER XV

### SALES LETTERS

#### General Aspects of the Sales Letter

##### *Its Advantage and Opportunity*

The sphere of usefulness of this silent salesman is constantly being broadened and intensified. There is hardly a commercial organization for which the letter cannot be made to accomplish an important part of the sales work, or even all of it. And yet, in spite of its popular, universal application, even to-day, when direct-by-mail selling has become so useful, there can be found numerous firms entirely in the dark in regard to the business-bringing possibilities of the business letter and the wide range of uses to which it, and especially the sales letter, may be put.

Various factors combine to make the use of personal, written selling appeals often more effective and desirable than the employment of personal salesmen: The entire cost of the letter in material, time, and preparation is only a fractional part of the traveling man's salary and expenses. A concern whose sales to retail dealers in one year were over \$20,000,000, makes this statement regarding the value of direct-by-mail selling: "They say it costs ten per cent to sell the average line handled through road men. When one sees how many of these clever gentlemen call on the same buyer in a day's time, it is easy to believe that estimate is none too high. We have no traveling salesmen. Our entire cost of selling goods through printer's ink is *less than three per cent.*" Its well-timed calls may be made frequently—persistently. In many instances this important little messenger—the postage stamp its only, but welcome passport—need not wait in any ante-room for an interview: the written communication gets prompt attention. Moreover, if its recipient should happen to be "out" or "too busy," the letter can wait patiently for a hearing. Such delay, which might easily embarrass a salesman, neither increases the cost nor limits the force of the written appeal. Another advantage—even if the silent salesman is made to call often and at short intervals, he is not likely to offend or make himself obnoxious, as, for example, an over-ambitious book-agent. More important still, the business man who sends out written selling appeals absolutely

controls every minute detail that enters into their production from their pleasing, attention-commanding appearance clear through to their expression of a cheerful mood, to their logical presentation of winning talking points, and to their last suggestive urge to immediate and favorable action. Then, too, the effort put into these letters may be made the combined efforts of more than one writer.

So pronounced has been the general improvement and so large has grown the number of sales letters which daily contend for attention at the busy office and at the quiet home that their preparation is demanding uncommonly strict and exceptionally painstaking observance of the fundamental principles of effective business English and wide-awake salesmanship.



organized, and visualized into a true, mental photograph of the reader. This picture the writer must have if he wishes to effect an individual, specific, and human appeal. In other words, when Jim Cox, who lives in a little Montana mining camp, where the trains are few and far between, the mail scarce, and the atmosphere decidedly "local," gets his sales letter in the only mail of the day, he will read it not just because it is addressed to him, but because he unconsciously feels that every word, sentence, paragraph, and argument in that letter, yea, even the paper on which it is written, make a unified, and conclusive appeal to his reason or his emotions, or both. In short, he knows that the letter is meant for him, Jim Cox, and for no one else. It means the reader's interest, first, last and all the time.

To be still more specific, it is the wise application of the little, but tremendously important word "YOU" which often turns doubtful prospects into bona fide purchasers. This means that in all selling talk the use of "I" and "we" should always be subordinated to that of "you." Thus, in the sales letter it should NOT be *our* goods, *our* large factory, *our* wonderful facilities, *our* new methods, *our* reputation, *our* aim, *our* needs, but YOUR problems, YOUR opportunity, YOUR benefit, YOUR increased earning power, YOUR time saved, YOUR better health, YOUR bigger profits, YOUR greater efficiency. The *ingenious* and *discerning* use of the pronoun "you" will impel favorable attention by the reader to the contents of the letter—its message.

The following "sales" letter was written not from the standpoint of the reader, but from that of the writer. It is deplorably weak in that it lacks effective application of almost every known essential principle of salesmanship:

Then observe how careful the writer of the letter given below was to make his appeal direct, personal, and effective:

Dear Sir:

Are you moving your allotment of Parker trucks—or are you storing some of them?

If you are selling them, you are hitting the mark the Parker Motor Company has placed for you to shoot at. If not, you are tying up money—postponing profits rightfully yours.

The present attitude of the banks makes it next to impossible for many dealers to stock the variety of body models their community demands; so we are meeting this emergency with "same day" shipments. If you wire an order, the bodies will be en route to you within twenty-four hours. Quick turn-overs on your money and "same day" shipments represent profit for you.

Bumper crops are reported from all quarters this year, and if you have underestimated the importance and magnitude of agriculture and its needs, get busy on your farmer prospects. Get a sample in stock now and by featuring the body as a vital factor in your truck sales, drive home the practical value of motor transportation—Parker Trucks and Garner Equipment.

Remember we ship your order the same day it reaches us.

Yours very truly,

Fresh  
Suitable  
Personal  
Compelling.

The majority of sales letters are unsolicited. They are addressed to persons who often have thought nothing of and are little interested in the seller's wares. Such people are in many cases indifferent to the point of being skeptical about goods or services they have never used before. If the writer of sales letters wants advantageous replies, he must convert the reader's indifference and skepticism into friendly attention to his written appeal and warm interest in his offerings. To gain this highly essential end, the language of the letter should be free from words and phrases the frequent and long use of which has robbed them of their power to convey thoughts to another person's mind agreeably and impressively. The loss of this power has made stock and pet terms of no value whatever to the writer of effective business English. For him they exist only as "attention and interest killers"—100 per cent inefficient—always to be avoided.

1. *Fresh language.* To get letters, especially sales letters, read, their message should be clothed in language the vivid freshness and delightful naturalness of which make it hard for the recipient of the letter to let it go unread. And, what is more, any message which, instead of being artificial and cold and dull, is natural and warm and stirring awakens the reader's interest and contributes appreciably toward molding this interest into definite buying desire.

2. *Suitable language.* The language of the written sales appeal should always be suited to the individual requirements of each prospective buyer. Thus, when reading the letter, he should not become conscious of any special effort made by the writer "to reach" him. On the contrary, the seller's expressions should appear entirely natural. They should, if possible, contain some words and phrases peculiar to the reader's character, work, or station in life.

A moderate amount of business slang, which might be used to good advantage in a sales talk to young, alert business men, would be wholly out of place in an appeal to old and conservative business men. A society woman would probably feel complimented by the use of French terms in a letter or advertisement, even if she did not understand them: but to the practical wife of a hard-working, simple farmer the use of such language would seem absurd. It would be very poor salesmanship to use medical terms when writing to an engineer, or engineering terms when addressing a physician. The matter-of-fact language interspersed with expressions that

"smack of the soil," and employed to interest farmers, would be a poor medium through which to get a response from highly trained professional men, whose range of expression is wide and varied. The business man of the South likes to be approached not in the cordial, at times somewhat effusive, man-to-man fashion used by salesmen in other parts of the country, but in a manner more conservative and dignified. And in writing to him, it would be good judgment to use occasionally some of the stilted and "dignified" phraseology that is so rapidly disappearing from the vocabulary of the business man in other, less conservative, parts of the country.

Know your reader, if you would know his mode of expression. Talk to him in words that are suitable and agreeable to him so that he will *enjoy listening* to what you have to say. In your choice of terms, do not sink below his level of expression. At the same time avoid the other extreme—of writing "over the heads" of your readers. However, there is nothing wrong with an appeal expressed in language that is on a slightly higher level than that used by your prospect. Visualize your audience. Then adapt your mode of expression to its individual needs. Talk to your reader on paper in a manner slightly more elevated than that which you would use were you facing him.

3. *Personal language.* The fundamental purpose of *each* individual sales letter is to sell not half a dozen or more persons, but only the *one* person whose name and address it bears.

As a general rule, it is less difficult for a salesman to convince one person at a time than two or more persons, because he can adjust his talk more adequately to the character and needs of only one. He can be much more specific and to the point in talking to one person than if he has to address five or ten. Think of your reader as sitting at your desk right in front of you, looking you squarely in the eyes, now smiling perhaps, then shifting uneasily in his chair and frowning at something you have just said. Now talk to him—personally—on paper.

Your message may be meant for ten thousand people whose names appear on your mailing list. But do not let that fact keep you from making your appeal personal, and do not, by the choice of your expressions or any other means, give the recipient of your letter the impression that you are making a general instead of a personal appeal. For the moment he realizes that your letter has the earmarks of a mass appeal, his interest and enthusiasm will melt away like mountain-snows under a summer sun.

Your letter comes to your reader as the distinct representative of your house, and as such it should have all the characteristics of a personal

messenger—it should be as specific and direct in its language as your salesman would be on a similar mission.

Omit all general assertions from your letter and confine yourself to specific statements. The force of your entire appeal is directed not to the person of one *Miller in general*, whose name just happens to be on your mailing list, but to the person of one William F. Miller, who now owns a three-hundred acre farm in Jones County, Iowa, worth two hundred dollars an acre, and bought at thirty dollars an acre about thirty years ago, which was exactly five years after he and his wife landed in New York from the old country, from England. Moreover, according to the information you have gathered from various sources, this particular Miller uses modern machinery on his farm and has a spacious, up-to-date home. In addition to the local newspaper and two farm journals, he reads the *Saturday Evening Post* and the *Chicago Daily Tribune*. He is a Mason and president of the Jones County Boosters. His two boys are studying agriculture at the Iowa State College, and so on. Now, as a matter of fact, he who prepares written selling appeals may not be able to secure as specific and valuable data concerning every name on his mailing list; nevertheless, he should make a decided effort to obtain all the information he can.

A business communication the paragraphs of which are overloaded with “you’s,” intended to serve as make-believe for genuine personal interest, represents as much wasted energy as does the letter in which the extensive use of “I” or “we” precludes adaptation to the reader’s point of view. On the other hand, the discriminating, selective, and individualized application of the pronoun “you” will aid in making the language and tone of a letter personal, in securing the reader’s confidence, and so in surrounding the entire message with a “this is intended for YOU ONLY” atmosphere—an atmosphere decidedly conducive to favorable action on the part of the reader. Besides, the tone of the letter should show that the seller is enthusiastic over his goods. It must imply that while he is in the business for his own profit, his basis for success is the satisfaction of his customers.

4. *Compelling language.* No matter how fresh, how suitable, and how personal the language of a selling letter, its value is likely to be insignificant unless it spurs the reader to immediate and agreeable action. That is the ultimate objective of all sales talk—ACTION. To produce it, written salesmanship must be clear, suggestive, realistic, original, impressive—action-inviting—action-compelling.

For instance, at the end of the letter, short, specific, and definite statements of the “Do so and so” kind are more productive of action than are

lengthy and less suggestive sentences. Their very brevity suggests quick thought, prompt decision—invites direct action.

Furthermore, action will result from any selling talk only if it has been positively and vividly suggested. It is human nature to postpone action. Most people, therefore, must first be definitely and emphatically told to take a certain step before they will do so. The most effective forms in which to clothe statements to bring about action are the question and the command.

Since action is the main purpose of the sales letter, it is apparent that action-producing language should be employed, and especially in the most emphatic position of the letter—its closing paragraph. For here its purpose is to stir the reader to do the thing which the writer wants him to do before he lays the letter aside and turns his thoughts away from the message to other things.

### *Its Material: Sources*

The actual drawing power of all sales talk, personal or written, depends to no small extent on the quality and amount of information conveyed, and which, in turn, constitutes its reason for being. Is the material gathered recent? Is it "newsy"? Is it based on fact? Is it likely to be or can it be made of interest to the prospect? These are some of the important questions which should be answered satisfactorily before any attempt is made to put the sales appeal into its final form. He who writes sales letters should have good and abundant material for his task—definite, concrete, and interesting *facts*—which he can organize and model into order-producing letters.

Basic data for sales letters should be founded on a thorough study of

The goods  
The seller  
The prospect.

Such a study might well be based on the following general outline, meant merely to be suggestive:

#### I. The Goods

A. Raw Stage: source  
supply  
quality  
quantity  
price  
handling  
outstanding facts

B. Manufacturing Stage: processes used  
number  
kind  
mechanical devices used  
outstanding facts

C. Finished Stage: quality  
quantity  
price  
handling  
outstanding facts

C-1. Finished Goods: weak selling points  
strong selling points

D. Comparison with competitors' goods as to:  
general selling policy  
quality  
price  
terms  
handling  
ultimate profit to retailer  
ultimate benefit to consumer  
outstanding differences

## II. The Seller

### A. General Information

1. Business: character  
size  
location  
age  
standing
2. Organization: general business policy  
departments  
personnel
3. Outstanding Features

### B. Specific Information

1. Selling Policy
  - (a) Salesmen  
Advertising  
Sales Letters, etc.
  - (b) Prices  
Terms, discounts  
Handling and Filling Orders
  - (c) General Policy Toward Customers
  - (d) Outstanding Features

## III. The Prospect

A. General Characteristics: age, sex, nationality, etc.  
 education  
 environment: present living conditions  
 occupation  
 business or professional standing

B. Special Characteristics: habits  
 likes and dislikes  
 hobbies  
 other peculiarities

## C. Probable Reasons for Buying:

Satisfaction and Service	{ profit through resale			
	pleasure	{ through saving of }	effort time money	
	convenience			
	efficiency			
	{ greater earning capacity affection for others, etc. outstanding reasons.			

When it comes to specific selling points—definite reasons why the prospect should invest his money in the seller's wares—the following sources of information should prove particularly fruitful:

## I. Talks with

1. Salesmen about
  - (a) Selling points
  - (b) Objections
2. Old customers
  - (a) Satisfied? Why?
  - (b) Dissatisfied? Why?
3. Prospective customers
  - (a) Interested? Why?
  - (b) Uninterested? Why?

## II. Readings of

1. Advertisements—old and new
2. Booklets, enclosures, etc.
3. Old sales, and follow-up letters
4. Customers' and prospects' letter  
 of inquiry, of complaint, of  
 commendation.
5. Competitors' sales literature.



All material for the sales letter should be selected from the viewpoint of the prospect. That is the only way of making sure that it includes what he MAY want to know about the goods. The final arrangement and presentation of the data should bring out definitely and conclusively the following essential arguments:

The goods will benefit the prospect

The goods are different from or superior to those of the competitor

The goods are needed by the prospect now.

### III. Fundamental Parts of the Sales Letter

#### I. Necessity of a Plan

To bring about a complete sale the following must be secured:

Attention  
Desire  
Conviction  
Action.

In other words, it is necessary first to rouse the prospect from inactive indifference, or even mild opposition, to friendly attention and warm interest in the seller's appeal; to lead him then from careless disregard or indifferent skepticism to hearty belief and thorough confidence in the writer's goods; thirdly, to meet his various objections to buying with cheerful, suggestive persuasion, thus securing his full conviction; and lastly, to urge him persuasively to substitute for inaction—action, *to buy*.

Every letter that is designed to make a complete sale to a person not previously approached in the matter must be built on these four fundamentals. They constitute the legs, so to say, on which the silent salesman must stand if he wishes to secure a favorable hearing.

So that we may see the detailed working and application of these four functions, let us, for a moment, study the letter given below, which is a good example of an unsolicited sales appeal.

This letter was processed in small type on good, 6 x 9, white paper which bore a very simple letterhead. Both the date and the inside address were omitted. The superscription on the envelope, which bore the return-card on the back-flap, was written with pen and ink. The letter was sent by first-class mail to a selected list of prospects among whom were many professional men.

Please send me the 30 volumes of the De Luxe Edition of the Pocket Library. I will pay the postman \$3.98, plus the postage, upon delivery. If, however, the books do not in every way come up to the sample shown, I reserve the right to return them ANY TIME WITHIN THIRTY DAYS, and you agree to refund my money. It is understood that \$3.98 plus postage is positively the only payment to be made on this set.

Name.....  
 Address.....  
 City..... State.....

My first guess was that a set of 30 books, in a binding like the sample shown, should sell for \$.....

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The entire letter is built around an original appeal to the prospect's curiosity.

The beginning, a single sentence, containing five "you's," is fresh, interesting, and personal. It classifies the reader as a book-lover, as an owner of good books, and so wins his attention, at the same time prompting him to read on.

Paragraph two, beginning with an effective "if" clause, compliments the reader indirectly on being "unquestionably a person of taste and judgment"—"able to measure not only their cultural value, but also their intrinsic worth in dollars and cents." It stimulates interest and awakens a desire to know more.

Paragraph three contains the heart of the message. Here the prospect is asked to estimate the cost of "a library of thirty of the world's masterpieces, bound in a rich and beautiful cover."

Paragraphs three, four, and five emphasize effectively and suggestively prominent selling features of the Pocket Library: (1) "world's masterpieces, (2) bound in a rich and beautiful cover"; (3) "each one complete, (4) each one an acknowledged masterpiece"; (5) "they are not only an adornment to the library table, (6) but the size makes them very convenient to carry while traveling." In other words, attractive, outstanding qualities of the books are being impressed on the reader, who, still curious, *is, in all probability, unaware of the fact that he is really reading selling talk and is being "sold" on these books.* By means of effective bits of striking description, put in the form of suggestive, interest-stimulating questions, these paragraphs seek to create desire for the books; and by apt reference to the concrete evidence sent with the letter—the sample binding—they aim to win conviction.

\* This number is used to key replies to this letter.

In paragraph six the reader's curiosity is satisfied: The seller suggests that the prospect test the evidence submitted—the sample binding sent with the letter—and prove to his own satisfaction the value of the Pocket Library by actually comparing its binding with that of books in his own library—"AND THEN OPEN THE ENCLOSED SEALED ENVELOPE AND SEE HOW CLOSE YOUR GUESS IS TO THE ACTUAL COST."

Would a shrewd newsie dish out a copy of MOTHER'S MAGAZINE for madame? He would not! "NEW INTERNATIONAL WOMAN out to-day, lady!" is what she'd hear from him. For she is unmistakably an INTERNATIONAL woman, just as surely as her husband is an ATLANTIC MONTHLY man and her house a HOME BEAUTIFUL house.

What's the patronage of such a family as this worth to you? In prestige? In influence? In habit of frequent travel? In actual cash? A good deal—on all four counts!

You can reach them—and them exclusively—through the INTERNATIONAL Group—the class publications that the wealthy read. And not only read, but buy through. And not only buy through, but consult about travel, writing six or seven hundred letters a month to inquire of our Travel Bureau where to go, how to go, and when to go to the places that catch their fancy.

All our travel advertising is grouped in front of the magazine—easy to see and refer to—placed along with the advertising of the leading makers and retailers of luxury products designed to appeal to the wealthy.

Could you get better publicity—with less waste circulation—anywhere than in these recognized travel guides—for only \$10 per page per thousand readers?

Here's our rate card. The forms for that Fall Number close September 5. Schedule your space with us—NOW!

First of all, notice the attention-winning opening—a single, short sentence—very attractive to the eye. It can be seen and read at a glance. It is personal: "Look (*You*) across Grand Central Concourse *with me*." To add to its strength, it is put in the form of a pleasant, suggestive command. The reader will find it *hard to resist* "looking" and cannot help noticing "that slim elegant woman . . ." Thus, the opening sentence of this letter commands such a degree of interested attention that the recipient would have difficulty in refraining from reading it. His curiosity has been aroused: he is eager to know what comes next, he longs to learn more about "that slim, elegant woman . . ."

This curiosity is partly and very effectively satisfied in the third paragraph. Here the reader is appealed to by means of a vivid and realistic description of the person he wishes to reach or should reach through his advertising—the woman of wealth—his logical customer. Note carefully the smooth transition from the first to the second, and from the second

to the third paragraph. There is no abrupt break in the pleasant continuity of thought—the reader is led rapidly from the end of one paragraph to the beginning of the next, unaware that he is being led. He is conscious of no break whatever. Furthermore, the description in the third paragraph is so vivid and fascinating as to make him desire to want to know more—to want to read on.

In paragraph four this description of the reader's prospective customer is brought to a fitting and definite close: the woman pictured in the three preceding paragraphs is finally classified as "unmistakably an INTERNATIONAL woman." Attention has been attracted. Interest has been aroused.

Now the reader's necessity for reaching this particular prospect is being played upon.

Paragraph five, by means of a series of personal questions arranged in the form of a climax, is designed to heighten the reader's desire to secure the "patronage of such a family." Observe also how cleverly and positively these questions are answered *for* the reader.

Now that the need to reach such a family has been definitely suggested and created in the prospect's mind, the next important step is to convince him that the service which the writer sells will meet this need. This is done in paragraph seven, where proof is given to the reader that the wealthy do consult the pages of the seller's publication, "writing six or seven hundred letters a month to inquire of our Travel Bureau where to go, how to go, when to go to the places that catch their fancy."

Paragraph eight adds weight to the reader's conviction by submitting an additional argument why his advertising in the writer's magazine is likely to be fruitful—"all our advertising is grouped in front of the magazine—easy to see and refer to."

Paragraph nine tends further to strengthen the reader's conviction of the desirability of advertising in this particular medium, by suggesting its superiority over other media. This suggestion is made in the form of a question to which the reader will find it difficult to answer anything but yes.

In the last paragraph action is suggested and made easy by the enclosure of a rate card.

## The Essential Elements of the Sale

### *Attention*

When a salesman calls on a prospect for the first time, he takes particular pains to make his approach suitable and impressive. He has learned

only too well the value and importance of establishing an intimate point of contact between his prospect and himself. He realizes that his getting a sympathetic hearing will depend on how effectively he *begins* his solicitation.

In similar manner the important fact as to whether an unsolicited sales letter will be thrown away as so much waste paper or regarded as a worth-while and important piece of business information which should be given a full, sympathetic, and immediate reading hinges largely on the attention value of the first sentence of the letter. Often by it the reader will judge the value of the entire message. Only if it arouses his curiosity, if it excites his interest, is he likely to dip deeper into the sea of words for the message.

To insure the reader's favorable attention to the letter, its opening paragraph should be

positive  
fresh  
appropriate  
specific  
personal.

1. *Positive beginning.* Sunlight attracts, awakens, produces; darkness depresses, nullifies, tears down. Cheerful, enthusiastic first sentences attract attention, while heavy, negative openings will void the writer's effort at the very outset. Your prospect is not paid to read your letter. He will probably do so only if he discovers at the very beginning a thought that is agreeable and pleasurable. A sound rule to adopt is: Use positive suggestion always, unless it is your wish to appeal to your prospect's sense of fear, as you might in selling fire extinguishers, revolvers, automobile tire chains or insurance.

Dear Sir:

Here is a new book, written to help men solve to-day's greatest business problem—the problem of bigger sales.

It proves with carefully-gathered facts and figures that sales can be secured through the scientific analysis and organization of markets. It shows the businessman how to make profitable use of this new science—how to go about it to increase his sales and his profits.

Very truly yours,

Dear Madam:

No doubt you are already planning your summer vacation. What will you do? Where will you go?

The Imperial Line answers these two questions by offering excursions to Alaska, which you will find above comparison with other available excursion trips no matter from what standpoint you may consider them.

Very truly yours,

Dear Mrs. Brown:

Everything you wear and use costs more money to-day than ever before.

For over three years prices have gone steadily upward. But the quality of wearing apparel, table linen, handkerchiefs, bed linen, and everything else that goes into your family washing has not improved with the increased prices. In other words, you now pay higher prices for no higher or even lower quality.

What is your solution of this problem? How are you going to get full value for the high prices you are paying?

There is only one answer. Do away with your wash-board.

Very truly yours,

2. *Fresh beginning.* First sentences which have a familiar sound or which begin with participial, or other equally weak, constructions possess little, if any, value as attention getters, and should, therefore, never be used. They are lifeless because they have been employed too often and too long: they are shop-worn as well as time-worn.

For stilted and trite opening constructions, one should substitute expressions that are free, natural, and fresh. If they are "newsy," so much the stronger will be their attention value. However, in striving to produce new and original beginnings, one should guard against the other extreme, that of making them eccentric, and therefore unsuitable for the purpose at hand. On the whole, however, it is better for an opening paragraph to attract too much attention and possibly be read, than to attract none at all and be doomed to the wastebasket.

## ILLUSTRATIONS

You don't have to buy tires often if you buy HAWKEYE Tires. Why? Because a great many miles are built into every Hawkeye tire that is made.

Success or failure, Mr. Miller, is staring you in the face right now. There is no half-way about it. You must advance or you will go back. Which will it be?

I am writing you these lines to help you answer this question. A letter from me some time ago to Geo. E. Walker helped him to answer this same question.

3. *Suitable beginning.* All first sentences of sales letters should be suited to the reader's point of view. Whatever information the writer has obtained regarding the character, circumstances, and habits of his prospect should be utilized to develop a point of contact which will be interesting, specific, and appropriate.

Suit your approach to your reader's view of life, to his prejudices, his occupation, his hobby, his needs, to anything, in fact, that is likely to affect the welfare of his business, his family, or himself.

Mr. T. Fowler,  
89 Spring Street,  
Los Angeles, Calif.

Dear Sir:

War's never over for the Northerner. He's continually battling sizzling heat or bitter cold. He's groaning over coal bills and heavy clothing expense. The city man bends under living's high cost, and cold weather diseases like pneumonia and bronchitis hide just around the corner waiting to nab him.

I know—I used to be a Northerner. Born in Illinois, I have had my fill of Ohio, Missouri, Pennsylvania, and Illinois climates. One day, years ago, I came to my senses and sought health, happiness, prosperity and contentment in the finest state of them all—Florida. For years I have studied Florida conditions, Florida lands.

Aside from the fact that the opening paragraph contains much negative suggestion (instead of dwelling on the disagreeableness of living in the North, the writer might have emphasized the advantages of owning fruit land and living in Florida), it is entirely unsuitable. As a matter of fact, so ill-adapted is the contents of this paragraph, so unrelated to the condi-



obtaining for it a sympathetic reading and serious consideration of its contents.

Dear Mr. Munroe:

How much of the fall and winter rains are you going to save? Will your soil be in condition to receive and hold the moisture instead of allowing it to run off as waste?

Deep plowing, chiseling or sub-soiling before the rains will put your ground in proper condition and insure next year's crop. The man who owns a "99" Tractor does this work economically. He has the required power.

"99" Tractor has tremendous advantages for deep work. It is more economical than horses or smaller tractors. It plows out its full width. It keeps out of the furrow. It does not waste power and fuel by slipping. Its long, broad tracks prevent it from injuring the soil.

4. *Specific beginning.* To produce a strong first impression and to warm attention into interest, it is important that the beginning of the letter be made specific. Since general statements are likely to cause weak and hazy impressions, they should be avoided. In their stead definite and conclusive sentences should be employed so that the reader's first impression of the letter and its author will be distinctive and deep. Study the following examples.

*General:*

Commencement Day is a great event for the hundreds of young people who will soon be graduated from our schools because it signifies an important change in their lives.

*Specific:*

Do you know that June 15, the day on which you will be graduated from the Lemare High School, will mark the end as well as the beginning of a very important chapter in your life?

5. *Personal beginning.* Bridge that gap—distance—which prevents you from presenting your selling appeal to your reader in person. Strike a personal, a "you" note, in the first sentence of the letter. Prove to your reader by the very beginning of the letter that *all of it* is meant for him, and for no one else. Remember that his first interest is in himself, his problems, and his needs. Appeal to his self-interest. Get close to him. Make your first words personal—agreeably personal.

*Impersonal and negative:* Business letters that do not bring returns are just so much money thrown away.

Our wonderful, new book "Silent Sellers" shows just how anybody can learn to improve and write better letters.

*Personal and positive:* You want your letters to bring more orders, crisp checks, live inquiries, fresh prospects.

"Silent Sellers" will help you get them!

A study of the following first paragraphs, all of which are direct and personal, should prove helpful. Observe also that the first sentences of these openings are in almost all cases short. Hence, they attract the reader's eye and may be read at a single glance.

Have you done anything about the smoke-stack you intended to build during the early winter?

---

THIS YOU'LL ADMIT, AND QUICKLY!

Your success depends on the number of SATISFIED customers you have.

WINNER HATS will steadily increase that number!

---

Are you moving your allotment of INTERNATIONAL Trucks readily? If not, you are tying up money and postponing profits now rightfully yours.

---

Have you eaten Charlotte Russe made economically without eggs? Served cold it is more delicious than ice cream.

### *Beginnings of Replies to Inquiries*

(For a complete discussion of inquiries, see Chapter VI.)

The beginning of letters written in reply to some inquiry which has been received as the result of an advertisement or other agency should possess the same business-creating qualities which make the first part of unsolicited sales letters attractive. These have just been discussed. To repeat, beginnings should be positive, fresh, appropriate, specific, and personal. The distinguishing mark of the opening paragraph of an answer to a request for information is that it makes definite reference to the communication which has been received.

When a person writes a card or even a letter asking for more information concerning goods which he has seen advertised in his favorite news-

paper or magazine, it may be assumed that he is interested. Of course it is not possible to tell from his request how deep his interest is and how promising a prospect he is. Hence, to insure getting bona fide inquiries and to keep off their mailing lists the names of "samplers" and curious ones, whose interest dies as soon as their curiosity or desire for samples has been stilled, many business firms ask those who answer their advertisements to send a few cents in payment of the mailing charges of the catalogue, booklet, or of the sample advertised. Just as soon as they are reasonably sure that the request for information or for goods sent on trial was made in good faith, they refund the money so paid.

The answer to an inquiry should perform the same functions that the unsolicited sales letter fulfills except that the reader's attention to the letter and a certain amount of interest in the goods may be taken for granted. However, desire should be awakened or deepened as the circumstances of the case may warrant, abundant evidence in support of claims should be submitted, and prompt action should be promoted in the same wise and to the same intensive degree as in sales letters which are sent unsolicited.

The opening of a solicited sales letter, an answer to an inquiry, need not win the reader's attention. It is almost certain to be read. It differs from the beginning of other sales letters in that it contains a definite reference to the inquiry. Such reference may either be made a part of the first paragraph, or it may be placed outside of the body of the letter.

If it is thought wise to follow the latter plan because mention of earlier correspondence in the first sentence of the letter might result in an uninteresting and therefore ineffective beginning, the statement of reference should appear about the center of the letter sheet, where it is surrounded by much white space, and hence easily seen and read:

Seattle, Washington,  
March 10, 1936.

The Mayo Company,  
82 Market Street,  
San Francisco, Calif.

Subject: Your letter KM/FS of March 4, 1936.

Attention of Mr. K. Mayo

Gentlemen:

On the other hand, most business firms prefer to make the acknowledgment of the prospect's letter a part of the opening paragraph, weaving it

into the general subject of the letter, and thus securing a point of contact that is both personal and interesting. The following examples illustrate this form of beginning:

*Where information has been requested:*

I wish to answer your request for information regarding our Modern Efficiency Course in a most direct and personal manner, assuming that you have realized the importance of equipping yourself with greater efficiency in your work, and greater ability to demand promotion to higher, more important executive duties.

Thank you for the opportunity of telling you about BABY'S FRIEND.

*Where a sample has been requested:*

The sample of Merrico Shampoo which we are sending you at your request is intended to show you the remarkable action of this scientific fluid cleaner.

The opportunity to acquaint you with some of the delightful desserts that can be prepared with Sterling Gelatine certainly pleases us. Your request for a sample is being filled and we hope you will use this sample at once, making one of the numerous delicious desserts described in the Sterling Cook Book.

*Where printed matter has been requested:*

Your copy of the SUCCESS BOOK FOR WRITERS is here before our eyes. It is a book filled with many sign-posts to greater earning and greater opportunities. We are ever so glad you are going to get it. It is so full of the things you need.

This is our advice to you: Take the book, shut yourself in a room all alone, and read it free from interruption. Every one of its pages may have an important bearing on your future.

### *Types of Beginning Sentences*

In beginning a sales letter it is advisable to open with a form which results have proved fruitful in drawing a prospect's attention. Among the more important types of openings are these:

The Question  
The Command  
The Statement of fact  
The Statement of condition  
The Story.

It should be borne in mind, however, that none of these forms is likely to be resultful in arresting attention unless it is positive, fresh, appropriate,

specific, and personal, for to name these qualities is to describe a good beginning.

1. *The question.* This form of beginning appears frequently in all kinds of written selling appeals. It arouses curiosity. The reader does not care to be "on the fence"; so it is only natural for him to answer the question to have peace of mind, if nothing else.

When shaping the first words of a letter into a question, make sure that it is unambiguous, pertinent, and personal so that when the reader answers it, he will begin to think in the direction in which you want him to, to the conclusion, "I need your goods or service for good reasons, and now!"

The first question in the following paragraph strikes at a very common, personal, and not unpleasant habit, one which is by no means typical of women. The answer which the reader will frame to it is certain to be in the affirmative in almost every instance. The same holds true of the question in paragraph two.

Dear Madam:

Do you ever day-dream?

Dream of keeping house without worry about the supply of clothes and clean household linen? Then this little booklet will interest you.

Note how the following questions arouse the reader's curiosity, prompting her to read on:

Dear Madam:

Isn't it a delightful feeling to receive a Christmas present that is a complete surprise to you? And if that gift is of real use—why, your pleasure is just that much greater, isn't it?

Something useful for your home—the home is the very essence of the happy Christmas spirit and good cheer—something that will make life happier for you—that's the ideal gift.

There is a good deal of interest value in the direct question asked in the paragraph given on page 352. The reader will naturally wish to know just what "one-feature" tires are, and whether he is "guilty" of having purchased any. In fact, this opening suggests in a very subtle way that he has, in all probability, bought "one-feature" tires:

Dear Sir:

Have you been buying ONE-FEATURE tires?

Tires that have been built around one point which the other necessary parts—every one a vital factor—did not back up?

If so, we want to show you the ALL-FEATURE tire—the tire that has not been sacrificed at one point to improve another—the all-round, consistent, full-service tire—the All American.

2. *The command.* In our childhood most of us have been taught to heed the commands of parents, elders, teachers, and others in authority. At that period in life we formed the habit of following commands readily and, in most cases, unhesitatingly. It is this old and early-formed custom on which the seller plays in his first sentences with the expectation of getting the prospect's favorable attention and action. Here are two examples of the command type of opening:

Send me \$10 by return mail!

In return, I'll send you a Bond for Deed for ten acres of as fine orange and peach land as I believe it is possible for you to buy.

Then you can save about 35¢ a day and send me ten dollars a month until your land is paid for.

Note how effectively the command has been employed in these two paragraphs. Though the first paragraph is rather negative in suggestion, it is quite as effective as the second, which is more positive.

Don't turn your house upside down by using a broom. Think of all the trouble and work you make yourself, sweeping and cleaning all day long with a broom and dust cloth, driving the dust from one place to another, all over the house.

Clean your home with a PERFECTION ELECTRIC CLEANER. The PERFECTION is a thoroughly high class vacuum cleaner which can prove its superiority as a dirt remover over any other machine made, regardless of price. It is so easy to use. It takes up the dirt and dust and every particle is removed quickly and effectively and placed where it belongs—in the dust bag—not in some other part of the house, to make you more work.

3. *The statement of fact.* To give this form of beginning attention value, it should above all else be made specific and interesting. General statements should never be used.

The Ventura Pump is so designed as to give it a greater efficiency than any other rotary or centrifugal type of pump on the market, and for that reason the Ventura Pump is the pump for you to buy.

Instead, some particular fact of interest to the recipient of the letter, some strong selling point of the product, should be stressed:

The Ventura Pump will handle from 20 to 30 per cent more water per minute for you than any other pump on the market. This means a saving of power of the same percentage to you.

Unless the statement of fact, or, for that matter, every other kind of beginning, is made from the standpoint of the buyer, it will not arrest his attention:

We want to tell you about our latest product—the Correct Check Writer. We have been building check protecting devices for over fifteen years, and the Correct model is the finest, most complete, and handsomest device we have made.

Now consider this effective first sentence which points to a particular need of the prospect—a need supplied, of course, by the seller's product:

You require for the linings of your Refrigerators a durable, rust-resisting sheet metal at a moderate price. GALVANIZED R & V INGOT IRON will meet this specification exactly.

Not infrequently, the statement of fact can be made to carry a news item to the prospective buyer:

The Department of Agriculture, in a recent Government Report, tells us that the average yield of wheat per acre in this country is 15 bushels.

The maximum yield, however, is 120 bushels.

4. *The statement of condition.* Employed to present or to stress some concrete fact of interest to the reader, it is often more effective than any other form of opening in getting him to assume certain conditions, and to think about them in accordance with the writer's suggestions. Consider carefully the effectiveness of these "if clauses":

I

If two good men tell you the same story, you can afford to believe it.

If five hundred good men put the same story down in black and white, and sign their names to it, you know it is so.

That is what five hundred good men have done in letters reproduced in *FACTS AND EVIDENCE*, a copy of which we are sending you to-day.

## 2

If I were a stationer, I'd make a specialty of stamped envelopes, and I'd sell more because the mailing of many letters is delayed for want of postage.

If I made leather goods, I'd contrive a cigar case with a memorandum pad as a front cover. With every smoke would come a reminder of appointments unfilled or errands. Men would carry them.

If I were a motor dealer, I'd sell service—motor transportation advantages as applied to the specific needs of every business man in my community.

Sometimes a combination of two or more types of beginnings will yield an opening unusually emphatic and attention-winning:

In beginning this letter, permit us to say that if you are satisfied with your job, your conditions, and your future prospects, read no further.

But!

If you want a real position, more money, and better conditions of employment, read on.

5. *The story.* In using it to attract attention one should be particularly watchful of two things: first, that the point of the story is brought out definitely and clearly; second, that this point has some definite bearing on the message of the letter, or, if that cannot be secured, that the transition from the story to the real message of the letter be not abrupt, but gentle and smooth. Otherwise, the prospect's interest will fade away at the end of the story, whereas it should rightly become deep at that particular point.

The point of the following story has no intimate relation to the message of the letter. Transition from the first to the second paragraph is abrupt.



*Irrelevant:* You know the story of the old sailor with the wooden leg. He was coming home one night, rather the worse for a beverage that was not one-half of one per cent, got his peg-leg caught in a grating, and walked around himself all night. He was very, very busy, but he did not get anywhere.

Are you getting 100% returns from your work?  
Do you know that you are accomplishing what you set out to accomplish?

Now read the following opening paragraph and note how thoroughly the point of this story has been utilized *for* the message of the letter.

*Relevant:* Maybe you've heard the story about the fellow who fixed the pump? He sent in a bill something like this:

For fixing your "dog-gone" pump...	\$ .75
For KNOWING HOW.....	5.00
Total.....	<u>\$5.75</u>

KNOW HOW is the important thing in ANY business. KNOW HOW is the stuff that made Henry Ford capture his millions.

And KNOW HOW is the stuff in BREMERTON SHOES that will capture for YOU the biggest shoe trade you ever had.

## *Desire*

1. *The necessity of stimulating a definite need for the goods.* Back of every sale is a human want. Buying always necessitates drawing on one's supply of cash or credit. Because of this fact, a person will buy something only if he needs, or at least *thinks* he needs, the article or the service. In short, he must want it.

From the standpoint of the seller, the desire most highly effective is an *insistent* demand for that which he has to sell; it is such a desire, for instance, as causes a young man whose attention has been drawn to a beautiful tie in the shop window to step at once into the store and buy the tie. The longing for the article makes him mentally uncomfortable. He chooses the easiest and most natural way to get his mind out of torment: he buys the tie. And he pays the price willingly, because the tie seems of more value to him (at the time of purchase at least) than the money it takes to pay for it.

But there are numerous things which, it seems, people should want of necessity, that they do not want at first sight. This is largely because they have never heard of the article or service, or because they have never

thought seriously about the possibility of its being particularly useful to them. To sell under such conditions it would be especially necessary to produce a state of mind in which the prospect would actually desire to possess the article or service because he foresees definite benefits in such possession. But, in any case, the writer of sales letters cannot afford to take the reader's desire for his wares for granted; he must be sure of it. For this reason he makes it a definite rule that every complete sales letter which he prepares shall be designed to whet the appetite of the prospect for the goods.

The logical time for the seller to stimulate a deep interest in his product, and a longing for it, is immediately after he has attracted the prospect's attention. Every seller knows well that people, as a rule, dislike "to be sold"; so, instead of giving his reader the impression that he wants to sell him something, he at once turns completely around and by trying to create a distinct need for the goods strives to make the buyer sell himself on them.

2. *The selection of selling points and their adaptation to customer's needs.* Suppose, for example, you wanted to sell a book containing a large variety of useful information in highly condensed form, and of practical, every-day value to persons of almost all classes and occupations—*The Universal Book of Facts*. First of all, you should make a thorough, down-to-the-last-detail study of your goods, the book, in this case, to determine all its selling features. Then you should list the various reasons why the prospect should buy, in the order of their importance to him.

### *The Universal Book of Facts*

#### Chief Selling Points:

*The Universal Book of Facts*—a one-volume encyclopedia saves you time, because:

1. It combines in one single volume of convenient size thousands of important facts which you can ordinarily obtain only from a large number of different sources.

2. It contains statements of facts in concise and highly condensed form: it omits all unimportant details and lengthy explanations.

3. Its facts are listed under ten departmental headings: Literature, History, Language, Religion, Biography, Politics, Art, Education, and Miscellaneous.

4. It gives much information in table form, thus enabling you to get important data at a glance.

5. It makes this information easily and readily accessible by means of a unique and simple cross index.

6. It contains the answers to thousands of important questions. These questions in the form of a question book are given free to every purchaser.

Other Important Selling Points:

*The Universal Book of Facts* saves you money, because:

1. It will save you buying many other books: it takes the place of a large number of other, necessary books.

2. Its price (\$9.85) is reasonable and only a small fraction of what you would have to pay for a reference work of similar nature.

*The Universal Book of Facts* increases your knowledge and so broadens your mind, because:

1. The information which it gives is necessary for every intelligent person.
2. It is interesting.
3. It is practical.
4. It is up-to-date.
5. It is authoritative.

*The Universal Book of Facts* is highly recommended by prominent educators, authors, and other persons of influence.

Other, Minor, Selling Points:

You should purchase a copy of this book, because:

1. Its appearance is beautiful.
2. Its binding is durable.
3. Its publishers are a well-known and reputable firm.

Having so assembled all the reasons why people should buy the book, the next important step is to study carefully the different classes of possible buyers, their tastes, habits, interests, etc., with a view to ascertaining the kind of appeal which should be used for each individual class. By a class of prospects is meant a number of prospective purchasers with some interest, prejudice, occupation, possession, or other thing, in common.

In the case of the *Universal Book of Facts*, the following list of prospects should be found workable:

1. The woman with children in school.
2. The woman without children.
3. The young man out of school.
4. The business man.
5. The professional man.
6. The farmer.

Should a need for subdivision arise, this could be met easily. Thus, under the general heading of professional men, the more important kinds, such as the doctor, the lawyer, the preacher, the teacher, and others, might be given, and a special appeal prepared for each.

The general appeal to each of these six classes would, as a whole be based on the same fundamental selling points. However, the order, emphasis, and presentation of these reasons for buying would vary with each class. It is clear that representatives of all six classes of prospects would be interested in the important selling qualities of the book—its time and money-saving features, its value as a reference work, its low price, and so on. These outstanding “talking” points of the *Universal Book of Facts* would form an essential part of every appeal, no matter to which particular class it happened to be directed. Each class appeal, however, would have to be adjusted to the special characteristics of the members of that class.

Every mother is more or less vitally interested in the educational welfare and progress of her children. Hence, in selling the *Universal Book of Facts* to a woman with children in the grade or high school, it would be expedient to stress the practical value and the general excellence of its contents for children of school age, the daily help which such a reference work would be to parents in assisting their children with lessons, and in answering the many questions which children naturally ask. The valuable features of the question book would also be emphasized in an appeal to this type of prospect. Thus it is clear that the sales talk would be based in particular on the natural, instinctive interest which every mother has in her offspring.

The interests of the woman with no children, on the other hand, are quite different from those just cited; likewise her reasons for buying. In this class we may, for example, find a woman who is active and prominent in social affairs. If she can be shown that the *Universal Book of Facts* will keep her well-informed on matters of general and current interest, and will so enable her to hold her own in society, and more than hold it, so far as conversation and conduct are concerned, she may buy the book on the strength of that argument alone. Or, she may decide in favor of it because of the artistic illustrations which it has, or because of its beautiful black leather binding with gold title imprint. Then, too, she may be particularly interested in certain matters covered by certain sections of the book, such as art, religion, language, history, and the like.

The young man out of school, ambitious to advance in his chosen field of work and desirous of increasing his earning power, will naturally turn

to that portion of the book which will give him helps and suggestions on how to do some phase of his daily work better. If, for instance, he has to write business letters in his daily routine, he will find the section on Language and Letter Writing of special value to him.

To the practical business man who is mainly concerned with facts, the book ought to appeal by the "pulling power" of its very name—the *Universal Book of Facts*, and also by reason of its form and general make-up—it is so convenient and time-saving. These are factors of efficiency which should mean much to every man in business. Moreover, the chapters of the book dealing with politics, science, history, etc., furnish abundant material with which to gratify the tastes of most business men.

Among the professional men the *Universal Book of Facts* should find special favor with teachers as a quick and handy reference work. This class of possible purchasers would naturally lay stress on the kind and quality of the material given in the book, making sure that it is recent, authoritative, and well recommended.

Lastly, the average farmer, a matter-of-fact man, would find much in this book of facts to suit his taste for practical information. It would answer many of the questions which he and his family are asking in connection with their daily reading, their daily work, their daily life. Furthermore, being often far away from a public library, the farmer would no doubt welcome this book as a means of making his own library more complete and so more valuable.

It should be quite clear from this brief discussion of specific selling points that a prospective buyer in any one of the six classes, while being attracted by the main selling features of the *Universal Book of Facts*, would purchase it only if reasonably certain that it met, in addition to general demands, needs peculiar to his own class. In other words, the general selling appeal would have to be supplemented and fortified by a carefully adapted, specific appeal to each class of prospects.

The gist of any sales argument is the high degree of utility as compared with the cost of the article to the buyer. Before purchasing, the prospect will ask himself: "Of what possible use and definite benefit will these goods be to me? Is the pleasure which I am to derive from their possession really worth the price asked? And if so, can I afford to pay this price?"

It is a truism that in almost every selling talk a discussion of the cost of the goods to the buyer should be an important part. If the price is either lower or higher than the standard price, it should be made the central sales argument, and the reason for its being low or high, as the case may be,

should always be made plain. While under ordinary conditions the main and general "talking points" used in a letter designed to dispose of, for instance, electric toasters to housewives, is convenience—their saving of time, labor, and trouble in preparing toast for the morning or any other meal—since there are a number of different makes of electric toasters on the market, it is imperative to show the housewife just why she should purchase, say, the Little Jewel Electric Toaster, and no other.

Now, as a matter of fact, this particular make of toaster is different from others in that it is reversible: all the user has to do to turn the bread over when one side is browned, is to turn the knob. Therefore, to create buying desire for this toaster it would be advisable to "play up" this special feature of the Little Jewel, making it the strongest and most attractive selling point. The price would be mentioned toward the end of the letter, and AFTER the reader has been thoroughly acquainted with all the important time and labor-saving characteristics.

Suppose, however, we wanted to dispose of a lot of Little Jewel Toasters at a reduced price, because they were slightly damaged, or because they were part of an odd lot, or because of the approach of the twenty-fifth anniversary of our business, or for any other good and legitimate reason. Immediately the price would become the dominating sales feature of this article and all other "talking points" would have to be subordinated to it.

To summarize—in constructing a sales letter it is all-important to select the chief selling point first, and to make it the heart of the entire message. And even though other, less important, grounds on which the prospect should buy, may be advanced in the same letter, the main reason for buying should command the reader's immediate attention. It should stand out over all others definitely and clearly. It should not be buried in a mass of detail. The writer should concentrate his most careful and most persistent efforts on its forceful presentation.

*The use of descriptive explanation to stimulate desire to buy.* The most effective way to produce desire is descriptive explanation, which to best accomplish its end must have certain important characteristics:

- It must stir the reader's practical imagination
- It must be definite
- It must be interesting to the reader
- It must be pleasing.

To avoid making the letter very long, tiring the reader with a lengthy description of details, the writer of sales letters should select with care a

few outstanding, and to the prospect interesting, features of the article, and then concentrate his description on them. All other essential selling qualities of the article should be exploited and described fully in an attractive, well illustrated booklet or folder of such size that it may be used conveniently as an inclosure with the letter.

*It must stir the reader's practical imagination.* Usually a strong appeal to the emotions of the reader will do this best. Draw a vivid and realistic word picture of the various uses of the article or service to suggest emphatically definite and positive advantages which its possession will bring to the user. Let your reader see himself enjoying the benefits of the goods in which you are trying to interest him. Do this in a manner so suggestive and subtle, choosing your words so skilfully, that his attention will be drawn to your description without his realizing it. Often a few well-selected words will suffice to call back to the reader's mind past agreeable and pleasurable feelings which he would doubtless enjoy experiencing over again. Play on your prospect's imagination. Start him to think about your goods by visualizing such of their qualities as are likely to appeal to his tastes and fancies.

Thus, if your purpose is to describe an electric toaster effectively to the housewife, keep before you constantly the fact that you are selling not a piece of nickel-plated mechanism, but a little fairy, always ready and always willing to assist her in preparing delicious, golden-brown toast for the breakfast table quickly, economically, and conveniently. If you are trying to market a book of stories direct by mail, you are selling not so much paper and printer's ink, but so many delightful hours of restful pleasure and contented happiness which the reading of the book will bring. And if automobile tires constitute your offerings remember, it is not so many pounds of manufactured rubber you are wanting to dispose of as it is so many thousands of smooth, uninterrupted, and easy-riding miles.

Is there anything more prosaic, more impersonal, and more unattractive than a course by correspondence—so many books to wade through alone, so many dry facts to remember and digest, so many troublesome test questions to answer, and so many never-ending lessons to write out? And yet, thoughts such as these seldom, if ever, enter the mind of the average prospective correspondence school student, simply because the correspondence school, the seller, knows that it cannot awaken buying desire for its service unless instruction by mail is visualized to the prospect as something very much alive, intensely interesting, and entirely personal. Therefore, the letters and lessons which a correspondence school sends out are full of interesting and enthusiastic statements designed to paint a glowing, colorful

picture of its service, with a view to winning a sympathetic reading. Note how the writer of the following lines plays on the reader's practical imagination in his endeavor to make the correspondence course attractive:

This Master course in Modern Business Letter-Writing is more like a modern school building with fifty classrooms, in each of which nearly the whole of the principal wall is a window of crystal-clear glass.

Into each classroom comes a teacher from the business world, one who has just wiped from his hands the traces of doing what he is about to teach, one whose right to teach others is written in the ledger of results.

In simple words, with vivid pictures taken from his own experience, he makes clear some fundamental principle in business letter-writing.

He is followed by another, who lays down before the class some of the shining tools of the letter-writer—business building English—and demonstrates the right use of each.

And then the members of the class turn towards the window; it is flung open, and there before them is a bit of the business world—a living problem-picture in which they can both see the actions and hear the words—chosen to illustrate the application of a particular principle in business letter-writing which was covered by the first speaker.

Perhaps the picture represents a sales conference in which an important promotion letter is being considered. The students take silent part in the conference, imagining themselves to be the man who is to write the letter when its nature and contents shall have been discussed and outlined by the conference.

And then each actually does write the letter and leaves it to be criticized constructively by an instructor who has himself done good work with letters. This criticism is returned to the student, and with it comes a copy of the real-life letter that actually solved the situation!

Remember, there are fifty classrooms—each with its practical teacher, each with its master tool maker, each with its practical-problem picture, each with its constructive criticism, each bringing to the student another master letter. Remember, too, that in correspondence work each student is the whole class.

Never before was there devised so delightful a method of higher business training. Here are no



dust-dry text-books, no weary lectures dragging their interminable lengths through the evening hours, no dry-bones problems to be fashioned laboriously into Frankensteins of flesh and blood, but really living, rushing, story-style bits of business life, lifted from life and set before the student full of vitality and interest.

This Master system has made of home study a gripping game, and a game in which the players gain in power through actual practice; power which can be applied at once to the problems of their own business life; power which can lift them far out of the ranks of detail-workers and place them at the desks of the great business-builders upon whom depends the whole world of commerce and industry.

*It must be definite.* Descriptive explanation must be to the point. It must in few words picture with exactness the article which you are trying to sell to the reader. It must make a definite, unified impression on his mind, one which is not likely to be erased from it for some time.

This book throws the mantle of personality over the old heroes of history. Alexander is there—patriot, warrior, statesman, diplomat, crowning the glory of Grecian history. Xerxes from his mountain platform sees Themistocles with three hundred and fifty Greek ships smash his Persian fleet of over a thousand sail and help to mold the language in which this paragraph is written. Rome perches Nero upon the greatest throne on earth and so sets up a poor madman's name to stand for countless centuries as the synonym of savage cruelty. Napoleon fights Waterloo again under your very eyes and reels before the iron fact that at last the end of his gilded dream has come. Bismarck is there—gruff, overbearing, a giant pugilist in the diplomatic ring—laughing with grim disdain at France, which says: "You shall not." Washington is there "four-square to all the winds," grave, thoughtful, proof against the wiles of British strategy and the poisoned darts of false friends; clearly seeing over the heads of his fellow countrymen and on into another century, the most colossal world-figure of his time. The author covers every race, every nation, every time, and holds you spellbound by his wonderful eloquence.

Always, the description should be couched in terms that will establish to the reader's full satisfaction the reasonableness and downright honesty of the writer's statements concerning his product. Such writing will produce desire to purchase by getting the prospect first of all to believe in what the seller asserts in behalf of his goods. Extravagant claims are unbusinesslike. They suggest insincerity on the writer's part, and always tend

to arouse the reader's suspicion—a negative, confidence-destroying sentiment which is unconsciously transferred to the goods themselves, and the seller's methods of doing business. Observe how the following boastful statement arouses doubt and suspicion in your mind:

We can fit you to take the MOST RAPID dictation—to do the MOST DIFFICULT newspaper work—to master shorthand completely in thirty days.

*It must be interesting to the reader.* To make the descriptive explanation attractive it is necessary to select and emphasize details in accordance with the reader's needs, to concentrate it on those definite selling features of the article or service which are most likely to appeal to him. There is nothing in the following paragraph to rouse the reader's enthusiasm over the benefits of the service he is being offered. These vapid sentences lack the human touch, the "you" element, the power to impress themselves positively on the other person's mind. They lack effective description and explanation.

Our courses in Journalism, Story Writing, etc., have been the means of helping thousands of writers, some of whom have become quite prominent and successful, to gain a foothold with the leading magazines. Probably no institution is better equipped to train students successfully in this work.

Now study the forceful appeal to the reader's practical imagination in the following lines, which contain just enough "you's" to produce a strong personal effect:

Just imagine a mighty black bass striking your lure at the end of a well-made line—imagine him going down through the cool, weedy depths, making the line fairly sing in the way it cuts the water—imagine how this plunging, jerking, spirited fighter makes your frail-looking, slim, six-ounce rod bend to the danger point. Ah! No wonder you give way to him, fearing to attempt to hold by main force.

Splash, and he darts to the surface and in a seeming frenzy throws himself into the air, a shining, silvery, quivering mass, filled with fight and anger. Splash! again—and he dives down to the bottom; you feel the burn of the silk line as it slides through your almost trembling fingers.

By now he has you sweating; you start to get up, you sit down, you are on the anxious seat every one of the seconds which seem minutes.

*It must be pleasing.* As a general rule, description should give rise to agreeable feelings. Your appeal should be to the reader's highest and best emotions. Remember, doubtful, negative statements, unless they are used purposely for an appeal to the instinct of fear, are out of place in constructive business writing.

The suggestion of having "three black beasts," etc., in his automobile is so negative in character and so lacking in efficient salesmanship as to disgust the recipient of the letter if he reads it at all:

There is no sense at all in being afraid of the three black beasts that lurk in YOUR automobile:

Beast No. 1, of course, is the ferocious fellow who rests so heavily on your tires that every sharp-edged stone you may run over is liable to cut through and result in immediate or future trouble. It is this beast, too, which gets inside the tubes, and blows and blows until your tire blows out.

Notice now, on the other hand, the cheerful, glad and confident tone that pervades the examples given below.

And all this glistening, gleaming whiteness is YOUR work, Bon Ami! At your soft touch the dull and dingy becomes the bright and shining. You cast your spell upon my grimy tub, and in a moment it stands forth like a piece of spotless china—and the nickel-work like new silver.

---

Up and about for a bright and cheery breakfast, first at the table when luncheon time comes around; demure and satisfying at the intimate tea time hour—glistening and dignified as dinner's gong is heard. What a life for a set of china!

### *Conviction*

After the reader's attention has been attracted to an article and his desire awakened for it, the next and third step in the selling process is to convince him that it is exactly what he wants and needs, to show him the disadvantage, inconvenience, and loss of doing without it, and to prove to him definitely and conclusively the readiness of the seller to back up all claims he makes for it. In a personal sales talk conviction depends largely on the honesty and sincerity of the salesman. "Is the tone of his voice sincere, convincing?" "Does his story ring true?" "Are his manners and general appearance in full accord with his utterances?" The success of the effort to sell depends to a large extent on the answers to these ques-

You must not hold back or hesitate about little things, such as whether or not you want to buy the Belz System—that is an insignificant trifle compared to the thing at which you are aiming. Own the Belz System and everything that goes with it, just as quickly as you can—grasp every benefit, every helping hand held out to you. What you want is the result, the achievement, the success, the fruitful reward of your efforts, the glad tidings that your work has been accepted or the news that your play will go on the screen, or your story on the news-stands.

In conclusion, convincing the reader of a letter of the selling features of a certain product means giving him definite, concrete proof of their existence. Such proof may take any one of the following forms, which are here given in the order of their effectiveness:

*1. Statement of definite, established facts or statistics*

1

Last year I wrote to a selected list of 1148 good merchants who had never sold WINNER SHOES. Five hundred and two of them, from Oregon to Texas, asked for samples. From this total of 502 I have already had 639 reorders—AND THEY ARE STILL COMING IN!

2

A Pullman car conductor employed his odd moments so profitably that now he gets \$65 a week as western representative of a large advertising agency; a stenographer laid aside her note-book and pencil to earn \$250 a month writing advertisements, and a window trimmer at 35 studied advertising and got \$80 a week as advertising manager of a large western department store.

*2. Testimonials from users*

3

This is what Mr. J. F. Lemmon of Santa Maria, California, says about his Mercura Tractor:

"I have had my Mercura No. 18789 almost three years now. I have replaced only a few minor parts on it since I bought it. The total cost of repairs on it has amounted to only about \$100. You can sure put me down as a booster for the Mercura Tractor."

4

Here's a portion of a letter which came to us to-day from Mrs. Mildred Anderson, Cheery Lane, W. Va.:

"Your lessons are proving a great benefit to me in originality and combination of appropriate lines and lovely colors.

"Your criticism and interest in each design have been most encouraging and helpful, and I feel sure that success will, with the help of the Fashion College, reward my efforts."

### *3. Reference to satisfied users*

#### 5

The LIGHTNING CASH REGISTER is used by the following merchants and business men in Corvallis:

The Wells Grocery Company,  
Maxwell & Brewer Clothing Company,  
The Peacock Restaurant,  
The Benton County Hotel.

#### 6

If you want the names of our CONTENTED CUSTOMERS, drop us a line. We shall be glad to furnish them.

### *4. Offer to send free sample*

#### 7

NOW is the time to prepare for those cold, snowy mornings. Get our samples of mittens—pre-paid. Return any you don't want, and keep the rest to order from.

#### 8

Test Victoria Shampoo for yourself. Use the sample which we are sending you to-day by parcel post in accordance with the directions on page 6 of the enclosed booklet every ten days. You will soon find your hair grow thick, long, and beautiful.

### *5. Offer to send goods on trial for test*

#### 9

I am attaching my personal check for 15¢, so that you may make the Standard Galvanizing Test, mentioned on page 8 of the catalogue, at my expense on the sample of Miller Double Galvanized Fence Wire which I am sending you.

Five cents will buy enough Blue Vitriol to make the test, the other ten cents will help pay for the five minutes' time it will take you to thus

find out for yourself before you buy that Miller Double Galvanized Fence Wire is from two to three times more rust-resisting than ordinary fence wire, and therefore from two to three times more durable.

(An original and effective method of submitting "proof": Though the prospect may not cash the check—in this particular case it formed the upper part of the letter sheet and was detachable—its very appearance as part of the seller's offer is good "proof.")

## 10

A trial will convince you that the SPEEDORA is the simplest, speediest, most accurate, and most economical duplicator you can buy at any price.

Use it for ten days—test it thoroughly. If it does not give absolute satisfaction, send it back.

6. *Offer to refund purchase price in case of dissatisfaction*

## 11

If you do not find that COOPERATIVE SERVICE applied in your office will do all we claim for it, you may return the book to us, charges collect, and you will be under no obligation whatever.

## 12

Your enrollment is accepted on the distinct understanding that if, when you have completed the course, you yourself are not entirely satisfied with it, every penny you have paid will be refunded to you. All we ask is that you give the course a full and fair trial to convince yourself of its value to you.

### *Action*

1. *The climax of the letter.* The effectiveness of every "single" complete sales letter is measured by the number of profitable returns it brings—by the number of orders it records in the firm's order book. There is really no one part of written selling talk more significant than its close. It is at once the climax and the crisis. It either wins or loses an opportunity, an order, a customer. It either nullifies completely the composite effect which the beginning and the body of the letter have so far made on the reader, or it brings such an effect to a turning point—action.

Before the reader will take the last and most important step, his

natural hesitation will have to be brushed aside and his habitual inaction turned into willing action. This is needful because most people dislike placing themselves under any, even the slightest, obligation, especially when to do so is likely to affect adversely the size of their pocketbooks sooner or later. This, by the way, accounts for the popularity of "This is not an order" or "Putting your name on this blank places you under no obligation to buy," statements found frequently in the clinchers of printed and written sales appeals.

In some of our large cities, owners of a certain class of second-hand jewelry shops may be seen standing in the doorways of their stores ready to urge the vacillating, doubtful, and undecided prospect who is looking at the window display to come into their place of business. And how well they know that once he is inside, his interest and desire for the goods can by means of timely suggestion and suitable inducements be ultimately converted into cash in the drawer. In other words, "He who hesitates" before their show windows is very likely to be "lost." As a matter of fact, these traders go even so far in their effort to secure business as to hail passers-by—former customers—and so to get them into the store by winning smiles, encouraging remarks, offers of special bargains, and the like. They have learned that in order to get people to buy, it is profitable to make it as easy as possible for them, and to do most of the work, yes, in some cases, even the deciding, FOR them.

Since the final aim of the sales letter is essentially the same as that of the personal salesman—profitable response—the methods employed to realize this common end are also much alike. These will be taken up next.

*Concessions as a means of hastening action.* Concessions—special reasons why the reader should buy immediately—are a common and effective means of changing indecision into decision and prompt buying action. If it has been decided to use a special inducement to promote response, then this should be done in frank, straightforward, and businesslike fashion. More important still, the buyer should always be given a good reason for the concession. For example, he will want to know just why the seller is able to quote attractive bargain prices on standard goods. If he is given no plausible explanation for the price reduction, he is likely to regard the offer suspiciously, and to discount the quality and value of the goods for sale. It is good business therefore to let the other person know why you can reward him for immediate response and action to your appeal.

Below are given examples of some of the more common forms of inducements:

## REDUCED PRICE OFFER FOR A LIMITED TIME

This course is now offered to you for the last time for \$50. This special price offer will positively expire April 5. You, however, will be given ten days' grace. In other words, we will enroll you as a member of our Institution, provided your enrollment is in our hands by April 15.

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Don't forget the date—January 15. The Board of Directors of the Institute will meet on this date, at which time it will definitely announce the withdrawal of the present low scholarship rate of \$85.50 for the complete course in Salesmanship. Therefore, if you act promptly, you can still avail yourself of the present low rate—a figure that is well within the reach of every business man or woman.

## ANNOUNCEMENT OF INCREASE IN PRICE

It has been the general policy of our institution to make the charges for our services as low as possible, but the increased cost of technical and clerical assistance, and the changes which we have found it necessary to make in our methods in order thoroughly to cover the needs of subscribers, have convinced us that an increase in the charges is necessary, both in the interest of our subscribers and the extension of our work.

The charge for our service, therefore, has been increased to \$30, commencing Monday, December 1. To take advantage of the present low rate of \$25 for one year's service, you should send the enclosed application on or before December 1.

## OFFER OF ADDITIONAL VALUE FOR A LIMITED TIME

As an extraordinary inducement for you to join the practical Public Speaking class, which is now being organized, within thirty days from date, we will give you two special correspondence courses for the price of one. Remember this offer is not available after the date mentioned.

## WITHDRAWAL OF OFFER HINTED

Now is your time! Our offer is limited because our Service Bureau can handle ONLY SO MANY CASES like your own. Therefore, our friendly suggestion is that you do not lose a single moment accepting all the benefits offered you by our service.



## OFFER OF ADDITIONAL VALUE FOR CASH WITHIN A SPECIFIED TIME

If you will send cash with order for our Safety Automatic within ten days from receipt of this letter, we will send you an excellent leather holster, designed and made especially for the Safety Automatic Pistol, free of charge.

## EMPHASIZING EASY TERMS OF PAYMENT

As you know, it is not necessary for you to pay the entire amount of \$100 at one time. If you find it more convenient, we shall be glad to arrange for a payment of only \$10 with your enrollment and \$10 a month for the balance.

3. *Means of simplifying action.* Strong evidence of the reader's need for the goods, positive proof of their meeting his need, and special reasons why he should buy at once have been placed before him in logical, climactic sequence, all for the sole purpose of winning his business. At this particular stage of the sale the flame of desire may be burning at its brightest, and a decision to purchase may have been made. To keep both desire and decision alive and active, show the prospect the way to action. But remember his inherent disinclination to ordering, paying out money, placing himself under obligation; in fact, doing anything which he does not have to do. And show him the smoothest and least-effort-involving way to action. Make response on his part a matter so light, pleasant, and attractive that he will have difficulty *resisting the temptation to respond*. Trouble him not with cumbersome order blanks which he is to fill out, neither ask nor expect him to write you a long reply. Instead, follow the salesman's course of action who, seeming to expect to get the order as a matter of course (and showing this conviction in his talk and behavior), leisurely places a blank before his prospect, and proffering his fountain pen, deftly says: "Now just put your name right here, Mrs. Brown, please." And in many cases Mrs. Brown will find it hard not to follow his suggestion because it is such a simple and natural thing to do. Note also that the salesman does not ask his prospect to "sign" her name, for that might bring especially to a woman's mind a vision of some formal contract, which alone would suffice to keep her from ordering because it would strongly suggest assumption of important legal obligations.

Coin cards, stamped envelopes, return post-cards, simple order and application blanks, and many other forms of inclosures are used to reduce effort on the part of the reader to an unavoidable minimum. Often the

mere sight of a stamped card or a stamped envelope is strong enough temptation to mail it. At times, however, the margin of profit on the goods offered direct by mail is so small as to preclude the expense of stamped cards or envelopes as inclosures. No matter what form of inclosure is finally decided on, the recipient should be able to convert his decision into action in little time and with little effort. Placing a single pencil check mark on a card that is already addressed and stamped, or slipping a coin into a convenient card and mailing it, helps the prospective buyer to take the final step conveniently, quickly, and unhesitatingly.

Consider now the following examples:

1.

Don't bother to write. Merely enclose your remittance with the convenient order form and this famous book will come to you promptly with all charges prepaid.

2.

SIGN THE POSTAL.

A PENCIL WILL DO.

THANKS!

NOW MAIL IT.

3.

We take all the risk—stand all the expense.  
Send the convenient examination slip—TO-DAY.

4.

Your Wonder Electric Cleaner is ready for you now. Just 'phone Bell 8592.

4. *The positive, suggestive urge.* After all obstacles have been removed from the reader's pathway to action, he is urged in the last sentence of the letter to respond immediately. Usually a positive, direct suggestion in the form of a psychological command serves this purpose best because it is a comparatively easy matter for most people to obey—they learned the habit as children—to comply with specific, definite requests. In all cases, however, where the "Do it now" style of close would appear too insistent, it may be softened to the less harsh "Why not get the benefits from these reduced rates by mailing the inclosed card now?" or "Don't you think you had better take advantage of this offer by clipping and mailing the coupon at once?" style of close.

Last sentences should produce lasting impressions. Whichever form they take, they should be specific, positive, and fresh. The "Hoping to

2. From magazine advertisements clip and submit with your comments three specimens each, illustrating:
  - a. strongly positive suggestion used in copy
  - b. weak or negative suggestion used in copy
  - c. effective clinchers
  - d. weak clinchers.
3. You have decided to sell your automobile in order to raise some cash quickly. You have just learned that a friend of yours in a neighboring town, one of your former high-school class mates, is in the market for a car similar to yours. Write him a letter describing your car and emphasizing those particular features likely to appeal strongly to your friend.
4. You wish to induce a friend of yours who is attending school in another part of the country to register at your school next term. Write a concise and vivid description of the life on the campus of your school designed to create desire.
5. Criticize, then rewrite, the following opening paragraphs:
  - a. Let us call your attention to All-Wear Tires and to the fact that we believe you would find them very economical and handsome for use on your car.
  - b. What is your hobby? From what sport do you get the most fun? Your inquiry suggests that hunting or shooting is the answer. If this guess is right, there is a great treat in store for you because this letter and enclosures contain a world of information of real and absorbing interest to the man that has hunting or shooting for his hobby.
  - c. We are sending this book on fishing tackle with our compliments. Only such helpful information as we believe would be of practical value to fishermen has been put into it. Needless to say, we think it is the finest book we have ever published, and it is our deep desire that our prospective customers will find many things in it that will interest them.
  - d. My right hand man, Dave Rogers, who, I'll admit, knows a lot more about letter writing than I do, says it's absurd to think that a perfect stranger like you will go out of his way to help us in our business.
  - e. Men and women in the education field have financial problems just the same as business and professional men, but they are more reluctant in freely seeking help due to the high idealistic standards thrust upon them by society. Personal finance is the type of service that even the most bashful public educators can feel perfectly at ease in using when money is needed.
6. Write an unsolicited letter designed to secure a year's subscription to your favorite magazine. Your letter must overcome the objection that its recipient is already subscribing to several magazines. Specify the kind of prospect whom your appeal is to impress. What enclosures would you use, and why?

7. Write a description designed to stimulate the desire to buy any one of the articles or services named below. Before proceeding with this assignment, make sure that you are thoroughly familiar with your subject.
- |                              |                                      |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| a. a dog or other pet        | e. the service of a small bank       |
| b. a canoe or motor-boat     | f. the service of a family hotel     |
| c. a radio, violin, or piano | g. the service of a retail store     |
| d. a fountain pen            | h. the service of a business school. |
8. The proprietor of a high-class tailoring shop located not far from the campus of your school has asked you to write a sales letter to students in your school to have their spring suits made at his shop. New customers will be given a 10 per cent reduction on all first orders. Write the letter. Call reader's attention to the style booklet you enclose, which pictures latest styles and contains actual samples of fabrics. The specific purpose of your letter is to induce the recipient to come to the tailoring shop for a personal inspection of the various offerings.
9. Assume that you are the president of the commerce or other club of your school. Write a letter to fellow students—prospective club members—inviting them to join your organization. Be sure to enumerate the various advantages of membership and enclose a blank which the recipient is to fill out and return to you. Supply all data needed to make your assignment complete in every detail.
10. a. Submit a complete list of the major, minor, and miscellaneous talking points of your favorite newspaper. Explain who the typical reader of this paper is.
- b. Write a letter based largely on the reason-why appeal designed to induce a lawyer to take a three-month subscription at a special rate.
- c. Write a letter based largely on the emotional appeal designed to induce a young housewife to take a similar subscription to the same newspaper.
11. The Standard Shoe Company of your city will in a few days place on sale a lot of miscellaneous men's and boys' shoes at prices from 10 to 25 per cent below the regular retail price in order to make room for incoming styles. The sale is to last only two days and will be advertised in the local papers.

Address a letter to the charge customers of this firm to give them advance notice of the sale. They may take advantage of the bargains on the day preceding the opening of the sale. Shoes purchased in this sale are not returnable either for a refund of the purchase price or for an exchange. Supply such additional information as you may require to make your letter complete and convincing.

12. Assume that you are the assistant to the sales manager of the Quieter Typewriter Company, Cleveland, Ohio, manufacturers of the Quieter Typewriter, a standard machine of the noiseless type. Your firm has recently reduced the retail price of its standard machines from \$60 to \$45. This substantial reduction was made possible by closing expensive

branch offices in fifty cities and by doing without 10,000 salesmen and agents. The only media through which your firm now advertises and sells the Quieter Typewriter are newspapers, magazines, and direct mail.

To-day your firm receives an inquiry from Miss Maude Sterling, 625 Channing Way, Anita, Texas, asking for complete information about your typewriter. Answer her inquiry, making use of the supposed facts given in the above statement and of such other data as you may think suitable for this letter. Inclose a booklet giving full information concerning the Quieter Typewriter.

13. Rewrite the following letter, making use of any of the following facts:

Hacienda Santa Anita is an old Spanish estate, 150 years old. Its cabins are equipped with picturesque rooms having private baths and all modern comforts. It is located in a wild and fascinating mountain region approximately thirty-five miles east of Fresno, California. The elevation is 6,500 feet above sea level. Trout fishing in the Anita River, which flows through the heart of the ranch, is good. Mountain horses and pack animals are available at any time. Reliable guides are furnished at very reasonable rates. In the first week of July, a famous rodeo—"the Cowboy's Reunion"—is held on the ranch, in which some of the best riders from the Pacific Coast take part. In the last week of August, the Indians from the nearby reservations stage an Intertribal Ceremonial—a spectacular and colorful festival. Life on the hacienda is especially attractive to men and women who like rugged mountain scenery, picturesque trails, lakes, and rushing mountain streams. It is an ideal place for the nature lover, the hunter, and the fisherman—anyone, in fact, who is willing to undergo the exertions which living in these mountainous regions entails. Most of the scenic places are not accessible by automobile, but only by trail and on horseback. Rates are \$40 per person per week. Reservations for less than a week are not accepted. Invalids or small children are not taken. Neither tennis nor golf. Good library. Home-cooking. Limited number of guests. Typically western hospitality.

Add such information as may make your letter a complete and convincing sales appeal.

Delpiedra, Calif.,  
May 8

Mr. Geo. Francis Richardson, Lawyer,  
45 Philosophy Way,  
Hedrick, Iowa.

Dear Sir:

This letter comes to you right from California's most wondrous Wonder Valley and we are enclosing one of our new folders, Mr. Richardson, in the hopes that it may tempt you as it has other tired business men.

As a true lover of the great out-doors, Mr. Richardson, you would be most highly appreciative of Wonder Valley which is in Fresno County. Think of it, we have over 1600 acres in the heart of this great

valley and it is unsurpassed for scenery and out-door sports on the face of the earth. We have plenty of home-grown green stuffs, milk, cream, and a real good cook.

There's nothing like it, Mr. Richardson—the rest of living here along the stream among the trees—your choice of cabins artistic and comfortably furnished or else accommodations in the ranch house.

While Fresno is pretty warm, we have at our elevation sufficient cool breezes and our trips and rides are planned to take advantage of this feature. Besides riding, hunting, and hiking, we have all kinds of water sports—fishing, canoeing, swimming. If we haven't got what you're after, we'll try to get it. I hope it appeals to you Mr. Richardson. Rates, etc., are in the folder. If you want more information, just scribble a note on this letter and send it back.

Yours for Wonder Valley,  
(Signed) Frank Bauer, Proprietor.  
Hacienda Santa Anita

14. As correspondent of the Progressive Bank of your city, you are desirous of increasing the business of your savings department. You have decided to send a sales letter to the parents of every new-born child in the town. You obtain information of this nature from a mailing-list agency.

The purpose of your letter is to persuade the parents of the child to save a little money regularly by putting it in a home savings bank, which you provide free of charge for this purpose. The money thus saved is to be used to open a savings account for the youngster at your bank.

Write the letter. Address it to the child in care of its parents. Adapt your message to the mood of the happy parents.

15. Criticize, then revise, the following closing paragraphs:

a.

Trusting that this message will give you the desired information and assuring you that if you become a student of our business college, we will spare no pains to make your work enjoyable and profitable, I am.

b.

We could build a boat like that shown in sketch, cedar planked, mahogany trim, for about \$800.00 complete, delivered in the water at our yard and if you are interested or if we can be of assistance to you, we trust you will not hesitate to call on us at any time.

c.

I'll be glad to make an advanced reservation for you now. Just let me know which date you wish to leave. No deposit is required. If you desire additional information, phone or write me. Any help I can give you is entirely free, of course. If you prefer, I'll send a travel expert to arrange your trip.

## CHAPTER XVI

### CLASS APPEALS

One of the chief reasons why so many sales letters as well as other forms of direct-advertising fail is lack of reader adaptation. Far too many letters are written without a thorough knowledge of the reader's interests, habits, likes and dislikes, aspirations, outlook on life, and particularly his customary reaction to the offer of certain merchandise or service. Personal acquaintance with members of the particular class of prospects to be addressed is very desirable in order to gain as much of the needed information as possible at first hand. The more intensive and prolonged this acquaintance, the sharper and the more indelible is the picture of the reader in the writer's mind likely to be. The author of *All Quiet on the Western Front* said that when writing this book, he *lived* in the trenches with his dead comrades for months—which is perhaps one of the main reasons why his narrative is so vivid and so unforgettable. If the sales correspondent would write impressively, he must in imagination live with his readers—describe and explain how and why they would, in all probability, enjoy the use of his offerings.

Next to personal contact, reliable information regarding the prospect's buying habits may be obtained from other sources. Thus, the numerous class publications—occupational and other magazines—since they appeal to more or less well-defined types of persons, often yield valuable data of this kind. Furthermore, most business firms find the inquiries and other letters which prospective customers sometimes write, a prolific source of information pertaining to the habits of the latter. Correspondents in the employ of wholesalers and manufacturers frequently rely on salesmen for a specific knowledge of customer habits.

Sex, occupation, age, nationality, education, religion, social position, wealth, place of residence, interests, and ambitions are only a few of the really important factors on the basis of which prospect classes may be established and written appeals formulated. Thus, there is a difference between the diction of a sales letter addressed to women and one addressed to men. There is a very noticeable difference between the English written to impress subscribers of *Vogue* and that written to impress sub-

scribers of *Wallace's Farmer* and *Iowa Homestead*. Even a cursory reading of the advertisements in these two magazines will show that. In turn, readers of *Vogue* differ from readers of *Good Housekeeping* (and other magazines), and readers of *Wallace's Farmer* and *Iowa Homestead* from those of the *Country Gentleman*. The writer salesman should classify his readers on the basis of the attitude they maintain, or are likely to maintain, toward the merchandise or the service which he is offering them. Thus, in selling *The Universal Book of Facts*, separate appeals were prepared for the following types of prospects:

1. the woman with children in school
2. the woman without children
3. the young man out of school
4. the business man
5. the professional man
6. the farmer.

While all six types of prospects purchased this book to increase their general fund of knowledge, their immediate motive was frequently of a more specific and compelling nature: the woman with children of school age wanted information primarily to further their scholastic progress; the one without children wanted information to improve her position in society. The business man was particularly impressed with the ingenious cross-index by means of which he could put his finger on certain facts quickly. The professional man, on the other hand, was especially pleased with the authoritativeness and reliability of the contents of the book. In short, each type of prospect had his or her own special reason for buying it. For effective sales letter-writing, a careful classification of logical prospects similar to this one, should always be made; otherwise, the message, no matter how painstakingly prepared, will come to nothing. There can be a well-suited sales appeal only if there is a clearly and well-defined reader group.

More specifically, adjustment in sales correspondence is achieved by using such physical form, diction, and tone as will most likely impress the reader favorably. The kind of stationery used (quality and size of paper; amount of advertising on it); the typographical arrangement of the letter on the sheet (indented, blocked, etc.); the method of reproducing the letter (individual typing, mimeographing, multigraphing, etc.); the style of English (simple words and short sentences; longer words and longer sentences; technical words and longer sentences), and, lastly, the kind of tone (formal or informal; personal or impersonal; lively or restrained; sincere or affected; serious or humorous; friendly or aloof), which per-



vades the letter—these and various other factors combined determine reader impression.

The following table suggests what diction and tone might in general be used for addressing rather broad classes of prospects commonly found in business:

foreigners	very simple English straightforward, conservative tone
artisans and farmers	simple English straightforward, conservative tone
young folks	simple English informal, natural tone
business men	simple English informal, often lively, tone
professional men	faultless, well-composed, at times technical English more or less conservative and formal tone
women	well-composed, correct English more or less formal and dignified tone.

This table is merely suggestive since the diction and the tone in a given sales letter vary often with the nature of the merchandise or service sold, the policies and the business methods of the seller, and the particular purpose of the letter. An undertaker can ill afford to strike a humorous tone in his sales promotion literature. A manufacturer, on the other hand, may at times find a humorous appeal to his agents or his salesmen very effective. Again, a long-established and well-known firm will almost invariably favor a conservative and somewhat dignified tone in its sales letters to impress the reader with its stability and reliability. A letter which is to bring tangible results in a short time is usually couched in much more forceful and insistent language than one written merely to attract favorable attention and to arouse desire. It is only by the thoughtful consideration and the wise use of all the leading factors contributing to reader adjustment that an effective written appeal is achieved.

### ILLUSTRATIONS

Study the style of the following letters. Which show the greatest reader adjustment? How is adjustment secured in each letter?

## A.

A personally dictated letter written by the president and general manager of an international motor truck corporation to the president of a well-known oil company.

My dear Mr. Holwerda:

For a long time it has been my conviction that as manufacturers of motor trucks we have a two-fold job: first, to build thoroughly reliable trucks; second, to assist the buyer of our trucks to use them in the way that will be most profitable for him.

During the past year we have been able to put into effect a plan for which we have had great ambitions; namely, extensive field studies covering the use of trucks in the more basic industries. Our Report "Delivering Oils and Gasoline Profitably" has just recently been completed, and I want personally to place a copy in your hands.

An important oil company executive told me a few days ago that it took him a long time to realize that as a user of several hundred trucks, he was actually in the "transportation business." Consequently, he has come to recognize that he has many problems besides simply maintaining those trucks in good working condition. Our research report surely bears this experience out.

Trucks will be bought, of course, in your organization, by your regularly constituted authority. In the regular course of events, our Sales Department will undoubtedly be presenting this volume to your Purchasing Department. This letter to you is principally to afford you an opportunity to read the copy I am sending you and then to retain it for your own files, or to refer it to someone else.

Many thanks for the courtesies extended us by you and your associates.

Very truly yours,

## B.

A firm of letter specialists sent the following message, which was very neatly multigraphed and filled in, to business men:

Gentlemen:

Picture the poor prune!

Remember the time when the prune was a boarding house joke! Now, you have to pay a quarter or more in the "dining car forward"!

Advertising did that!

Well, what about it, you'll say.

Oh, nothing, we reply, except maybe YOU have a product, or a service, or something YOU would like to advertise—with letters.

Naturally you'll want those letters to look their best. And that's where WE step into the picture.

It's our business to make letters look their best, we being specialists, if you'll pardon the use of that word.

Direct Mail Specialists, to be exact.

Within a phone's length of YOU—

Cordially yours,

C.

A firm of cowboy outfitters tries to meet bargain-price competition by means of the following message:

Dear Mr. Blank:

This story is common and about the same thing happens to lots of different people. The fellow to whom it happens, however, usually keeps his mouth shut—then his friend gets the same medicine. We have the dope on this one tho' and are going to tell it.

One of the boys down in Colorado a short time ago decided he wanted a new saddle, so, naturally, he wrote to several concerns for catalogs. The books came and he found several rigs which looked good but one was more to his liking than the others on account of the "low price." It was only a few dollars but he thought he might as well save them as not.

In about three weeks the saddle came and although it didn't look as tempting as it did in the catalog, he decided "it was as good as he could expect at the price" so he took it home. He was sure it was a new saddle because it squeaked when he got into it.

A few days after the new saddle came, some of the boys went out to brand some young steers and, of course, the new rig had to be "tried out." One good thing he did have was a "Silk Giant" rope, and when old "S-G" got one end around the horn of the new rig, and the other on the horns of a good sized steer—off came the rigging. That shot \$5.00 for

repairs. Then it wasn't long until the horn pulled out and he found his horse had a sore back.

Our friend is now riding a Hart #940 and says it's on the job right.

There is no such thing as a "\$75.00 saddle for \$59.95 Cash"—you get only what you pay for—think it over. Try a Hart Saddle. Sign and return the enclosed card for latest Hart catalog.

Yours very truly,

### *Letters to Women \**

Not only is the amount of merchandise bought by women as a class large, but their influence on the purchase of things for the male members of the household is marked and increasing. The woman of to-day is, as a rule, wide-awake. She takes an active interest in things in general; she is responsive; she is critical. In "getting in tune" with this type of reader, the writer should lay special stress on these elements of the letter:

Its physical make-up  
Its language and tone  
Its selling points.

*Physical make-up.* Social letters naturally predominate in a woman's mail. They receive first, favorable, and sympathetic attention. Knowing this, many business firms whose customers are largely women will use stationery resembling in size, quality, and general appearance woman's social writing paper. A good grade of white or lightly tinted bond paper of the single, or four-page note size, with a neatly printed or engraved letterhead, is commonly used. The envelope, which is somewhat smaller than the business envelope, usually bears the writer's return-card on the backflap, thus adding to the social and individual appearance of the letter.

To emphasize the personal character of the letter itself, small, élite type is frequently used. Typewritten or rubber-stamped signatures, because of their expression of the impersonal, should not be used in letters to women. One may, as a rule, write longer letters to women than to men and still be justified in hoping for responsive reading, because ordinarily women have more time in which to read and also because they receive fewer letters than do men. A woman, moreover, reads her mail during moments of leisure, when uninterrupted she can give each letter full and undivided attention.

Appeals to the housewife and mother carry in many cases colorful,

\* See *Advertising to Women* by Carl A. Naether, for a more detailed treatment.

vivid illustrations of the different styles and uses of an article conspicuously on the letter sheet. Thus, a manufacturer of baby carriages, selling direct to the consumer, uses with good success in appealing to the average mother a letterhead with six tastefully colored pictures of collapsible and stationary baby carriages, in each of which is seated a smiling, contented youngster. A maker of prepared, not self-rising cake flour the three chief talking points of which are "lighter, whiter and finer cakes" emphasizes each one by means of a striking, realistic, colored illustration on the left side of the letter sheet, thus making a very suggestive and attractive appeal to the reader's senses of sight and appetite. It should not be forgotten, however, that such elaborately illustrated stationery stamps the letter as unmistakably a sales, or even a form, letter, thus lessening in proportion its individual and personal aspect and effect. For use in writing to women of influence or high social standing, such letterheads would not be suitable, for they lack the qualities of refined simplicity and earnest dignity which should always distinguish the appeal to this class of prospective buyers.

*Language and tone.* The appeal to the feminine prospect should be clothed in expressions that are suggestive, dignified, modern, and correct. Woman is keenly and critically appreciative of language that shows thoughtful selection, careful adaptation, and grammatical precision. She will accept a message written in a style superior to her own as a delicate, implied compliment; she will welcome the discriminating use of a few French words and phrases here and there as subtle flattery. To illustrate, the language of the following paragraph is doubtless suitable for readers of the *Ladies' Home Journal*, though it might seem out of place in an appeal to women of distinctly different social strata:

Ostende! Dieppe! At these famous French watering places one may mingle these summer days with the élite—les élégantes of Paris itself. Here, Madame, Mademoiselle, one cannot but observe that perfection exquise de la toilette which so distinguishes French ladies of fashion—"les femmes à la mode."

But, you, Madame, need not envy these demoiselles Françaises. One secret of their subtle charm may to-day be yours. It is so simple. In the very words of France it is just this:

"Dans tous les objets de la toilette on emploie une seule odeur suave." Each article of the toilette should bear the same fragrance.

Furthermore, woman is an interested, keen observer of details when it comes to the selection and purchase of articles for her own use or that of her family. She will therefore read descriptive details concerning merchandise, provided they interest her and do not touch on mechanical details which are outside her sphere of daily experience. Thus the average woman thinks about the mechanical construction of a washing machine, table stove, or typewriter only in so far as it goes to ease her work and so to make more agreeable her lot.

Study the following suggestive description of the operation of a washing machine:

Briefly—all there is to a washing with the HOMER, is to put in the clothes and hot suds, close the machine, and the motor does all the work. In a few minutes the clothes, clean as snow, can be wrung by the power-operated and swinging reversible wringer through the rinse and bluing, and hung on the line while the washer is cleaning the next batch.

Results—a large washing done in two hours or less; no hard work, no tired back, no sore hands, no late dinners; clothes cleaner than formerly, and best of all, wash day just as happy as any other day in the week.

The *tone of letters to women* should be one of positive confidence, friendly assurance, and simple dignity. It should be expressive of an atmosphere of sincere interest in the reader's particular problems and of a pleasing, unobtrusive desire to be of definite service in their proper solution. Never should the tone be argumentative, but always soothing, pleasing. A salesman who carelessly gets into an argument with a woman over some talking point of his goods is almost certain to lose the sale. Woman is seldom neutral or lukewarm in her attitude toward persons and things. She either likes or dislikes. She generally goes by first impressions and very rarely changes her first-formed opinions, be they right or wrong. She is critical and sensitive. She will resent the use of obtrusive flattery and impractical "slush" in letters. On the other hand, she will respond readily to the earnest, dignified, and tactful appeal to her best feelings: she is ever appreciative of the finer things.

The language and the tone of the following letter are such as to inspire the recipient with confidence in the seller, his claims, and his goods:

Dear Madam:

We are very much pleased to send you, under another cover, to-day, the "Story of Pearls," as requested in your letter of March 20.

You will find great satisfaction in the possession of a necklace of ALPHA PEARLS, we are sure; and our agents, in your city, Messrs. Reeder & Peters, have been directed to extend to you every courtesy in making your selection.

We assure you that ALPHA PEARLS on display at Reeder & Peters are fully guaranteed by us, and if, after you purchase a strand, you do not find them entirely satisfactory, kindly confer a great favor upon us by permitting an exchange of these pearls, either for another strand or for the sum of your investment in them.

ALPHA PEARLS are indestructible: they will not peel or discolor under any conditions to which you would subject your better articles of jewelry or apparel.

You may be sure that Reeder & Peters will consider it a privilege to show you ALPHA PEARLS in their several tints and sizes at any time.

Sincerely yours,

Below is given an illustration of a routine letter written by an exclusive Fifth Avenue store in New York City. Though impersonal in language, and somewhat eccentric in form, its message, élite typed on a single, note-size sheet of white bond paper, that bears in dignified, small engraving only the name and address of the firm, certainly suggests quality of merchandise and service of distinction:

Page & Marker have placed in work the black satin slippers ordered by Mrs. F. Blackburn, and will await decision on the fitting of these before proceeding with the remainder of the order.

It has been found, since the taking of this order, that the shoes delivered on April 28 remain outstanding on the account. It is possible that this detail has been overlooked, but its disposal would be very much appreciated.

FKG/EM

May 24, 19—.

*Its selling arguments.* Woman senses more than she reasons. Her personal feelings enter vitally into every purchase she makes. A timely and

suitable appeal to her emotions is therefore likely to be more effective than one to her reason. Since the variety of woman is almost innumerable, it is not easy to say with any degree of exactness which talking point is likely to prove effective in a particular case and which futile. Business firms that sell direct by mail find it profitable to have their letters to women prepared by female writers, or to have the letter at least read by a woman before it is sent out. Woman understands the needs of her own sex better than does man. It is this thorough, instinctive understanding of the desires of her kind, and also her intimate knowledge of feminine expressions which enable a woman writer to prepare a letter that will come much closer to the feminine reader than would a similar message written by a man.

Before a woman would buy, say, an encyclopedia, she would want to be assured of any one or all of the following points:

1. It is useful and practical to me and to members of my family.
2. It is up-to-date and authoritative.
3. Its price is such that I can afford to buy it.
4. Its beautiful appearance would attract favorable attention anywhere.
5. Its use is recommended by recognized authorities.
6. It is now in the hands of several of my friends who value it highly.
7. Its purchase now would afford me a choice of two valuable premiums.

In a dress or other piece of wearing apparel, a woman would, first of all, look for style and beauty, while quality and even price might be of secondary importance. In an electric toaster, she would probably look for convenience, usefulness, and appearance. In a washing machine, style and appearance would count for little, while utility—the saving of time and work—would be the all-important reason for buying.

Other convincing arguments for appeals to women are:

*Satisfaction guaranteed or money back.* Mail-order and other firms stress their "satisfaction guaranteed" policies to remove all thought of risk from the prospective buyer's mind and so to pave the way for a sale.

*Testimonials.* Statements from satisfied users of the article in question are especially valuable if they come either from persons prominent in public or from persons whom the reader knows personally.

*Odd prices.* Mail-order catalogues quote article after article for women in such prices as \$ .98, \$1.39, \$1.79, \$1.98, \$3.29, \$4.95, \$9.98, etc., to create the impression in woman's mind that the goods have been reduced



say from \$1 to \$ .98; from \$5 to \$4.95, from \$10 to \$9.98, and so on, and also because such fractional prices appear much smaller to the unreflecting than prices in round numbers.

*"Special" and bargain sales.* So-called "sales" always attract woman buyers because they suggest bargains, and there are few women who will not take advantage of an attractive bargain. Department stores in the larger cities provide for numerous special sales, such as "week-end sales," "anniversary sales," "inventory sales," "holiday sales," and many others. They always give a reason for the sale to satisfy woman's instinctive curiosity and to justify price reductions in the eyes of the prospective buyer.

*Samples and premiums.* The former are submitted to the reader as actual proof which she can test for herself; the latter are offered for quantity purchases in place of discounts. Coupons and trading stamps which some department stores give to customers, who by presenting a given number of either may obtain a premium, belong also in this class.

*Prize contests.* They are largely used in the selling campaigns of firms that market baking powder, gelatine; also food products, such as flour, prepared foods, and the like, to stimulate interest and buying desire.

## ILLUSTRATIONS OF LETTERS TO WOMEN

Here is a letter written to a woman by a woman. It was exceptionally successful in bringing many immediate returns. Note its "chatty," intimately personal tone:

Dear Madam:

A good fairy wishes to be admitted into your home to help you from morning till night.

When you wake up in the morning, your first thought is: "What shall I have for the family's breakfast?" and you always decide on that which can be made best in the least possible time, don't you? Now this is where the good fairy can help you.

Perhaps you have never thought of a LITTLE JEWEL ELECTRIC TOASTER as a good fairy, but it is such to so many progressive housewives that we feel sure that you, too, can hardly afford to be without one. Early in the morning it starts its fairylike work, toasting better and quicker than any other toaster on the market.

We do not ask you to buy one of these toasters on our recommendation only, but we ask you to visit us on some Monday, Wednesday, or Friday afternoon (bring this letter with you) in order that you may

volume of illustrated advertisements. Of course, the best time in which to approach the man in the country with important offers is in winter, when he has many spare hours to read and to think about them. Letters sent him at other times of the year, when he is likely to be busy, should be short and to the point.

The language of the letter to the farmer should be simple, direct, and, above all else, clear. Plain words which the average man can understand together with a few expressions that smack of the soil are best. Talk to the farmer—on paper—as you would if you were facing him at his home in the evening after a hard day's work—in a frank, open, friendly, straight-from-the-shoulder way. Remember he is suspicious of offers made in "high brow" language, because they have been used as the means of taking advantage of him in bygone years. Be direct, therefore, when talking to him, be frank. Make sure that he can interpret your message in only one way—the right way—your way. Let all your statements be definite and specific. Let them concern facts rather than opinions, because it is facts this reader wants.

To convince the farmer of the merits of an article, it is necessary to give him proof—known and cogent facts which he himself can substantiate, if he so desires. Price and quality are of foremost importance to him. Style and appearance mean little to him. Thus, when he buys an overcoat, he looks first of all for quality. Next he wants to know what the coat will cost him. If the material, color, and price appeal to him, he will buy the coat regardless of its style. Moreover, farmers as a rule take advantage of every opportunity to save money on purchases of merchandise. Any offer, therefore, that has the earmarks of a bargain is likely to attract their favorable attention. Other effective selling arguments are:

Free trial offer.  
Money-back guarantee.

Testimonials.  
Samples.

A firm selling tractors to farmers uses a snap-shot, showing a satisfied customer using the machine in the field, as proof that its tractor can do certain work under certain conditions. This actual photograph, which is attached to the letter sheet, is fully explained and commented upon in the letter. Being a lifelike picture, it has much human interest value. Its effect on the reader is likely to be more impressive and lasting than that created by, say, illustrations found on a letterhead or circular, because it is a real picture of actually existing conditions. It presents definite, provable facts. Here is such a letter:

Do you know Mr. John Ahlrich of Anamosa, California? He farms about the hilliest 600 acres in that part of the state, and he does it all with a Lightning "99" Tractor. Before he bought the tractor, he farmed (as best he could) with 40 head of stock.

In the picture, Mr. Ahlrich's Lightning "99" is pulling a five-disc plow up a hill that is pretty close to 30 per cent, and he is plowing deeper and better than he ever did with his horses. The first year he had the "99," his barley crop was almost doubled, from 12 sacks to 21 sacks an acre. It was the power of the Lightning "99" on these steep hills that enabled him to get his extra yield, because he could plow deeper.

To say that Mr. Ahlrich is pleased with his Lightning "99" is putting it mildly. "I would quit farming rather than go back to using horses," is what he said. There are hundreds of other "99" Tractor owners, who feel just like that. If you had a Lightning "99" Tractor doing your work, you would feel the same sense of pride and satisfaction as Mr. Ahlrich.

Why not get a Lightning "99" Tractor yourself and make bigger profits? Remember it is a part of our business to help every Lightning Tractor owner to be successful with his machine and that's what we'll do for you. Just tell us when our representative may call and talk the matter over with you. Use the enclosed post-card.

Note how the writer of the letter given below seeks to convince the reader of the value of his own product by suggesting that he test it in open competition with other products. This is good proof. He goes even farther than that: he offers to send his machine on thirty days' free trial, asks for no money in advance, and agrees to pay the freight both ways in case the prospect is not fully convinced by his own test:

The Universal is so far superior to any other separator that the additional cream it saves you will soon pay for the separator.

The booklet we are enclosing goes into detail regarding material and construction. Read it over carefully—study the Universal's exclusive features, such as—its SELF-BALANCING BOWL—its SINGLE BALL-BEARING BOWL BEARING—its WHITE BATH-TUB ENAMEL CREAM AND MILK CHAMBERS, etc., etc. You will then understand why the Universal is better. Buying a separator is a business proposition. Go about it in a businesslike manner, and if you do, we know your choice will be the UNIVERSAL.

Here's a suggestion: Tell your local separator agent that you want to try one of his separators on your farm for 30 days. Then write to several of the best separator manufacturers in the United States and request them to send you one of their separators for 30 days' free trial, so that you can make a competitive test. Make it plain to them, that in case their separator loses in this test, they will have to pay freight charges both ways. Then, let us send you a Universal on a 30-day free trial. We do not ask you to send us any money, or to obligate yourself in any way. You simply set the Universal up, run it for 30 days on your own farm, test it in every way you can think of, and then if the Universal loses out in this test, ship it back to us, and we will pay the freight both ways.

But the Universal will not lose out—that is the secret of our success. If you want one of these free tests, it is important that you make your request at once, as there is bound to be a big shortage this season. We enclose a Free Trial Order Blank. Sign and send it in to-day.

The accompanying four-page illustrated letter, meant for farmers, was prepared by the manufacturer's advertising staff for dealer use.

### *Letters to Business Men as Dealers*

A dealer buys merchandise not for consumption but for resale. His viewpoint as a prospective purchaser is therefore entirely different from that of the consumer. He is a business man. He is interested in the quality of the goods only in so far as it establishes their salability: satisfied trade, rapid turnover of the stock, and big profits. He wants repeat sales which are the result of a good, consistent demand. This demand, in turn, is the expression of satisfaction by the consumer over the quality and other selling features of the goods. Dealers know that in the end it is far more profitable for them to stock up on merchandise with a relatively small margin of profit but a high and quick turnover, than to fill their shelves with goods, which, though promising big profits, do not yield them in the end because they stay on the shelves. There is no brisk demand to move them and so turn them into money. On the other hand, since the dealer's aim is to secure the largest possible return on his investment, he prefers goods of only fair quality but high financial return to high quality goods that are known to bring only an average percentage of returns. In brief, the basic questions which the sales letter to the dealer must answer convincingly and satisfactorily are these:

# QUALITY FARM TOOLS

Rock  
Island  
Please

Rock  
Island  
Please

Dear Friend

butter fat

The most valuable product of your dairy is

The following table shows what you lose during each year from each good cow by various methods of separation

26.2 lbs. by shallow pan setting

10 1 lbs by deep pan setting

and only

1 2 lbs by using a cream separator.

Separating is a job—and the women folks do most of it on practically every farm. It's real work for them, not only filling the supply tank and operating the separator but also cleaning up afterwards.

You can make this work easier for your family and more pleasant for everyone by using the separator that works easily whether operator is standing or sitting; has a low swinging supply tank—easy to fill; ball bearings wherever necessary, is completely lubricated and has in every test for over twenty years skimmed so completely that owners know they are getting the greatest profits obtainable from milk produced in their dairy herd.

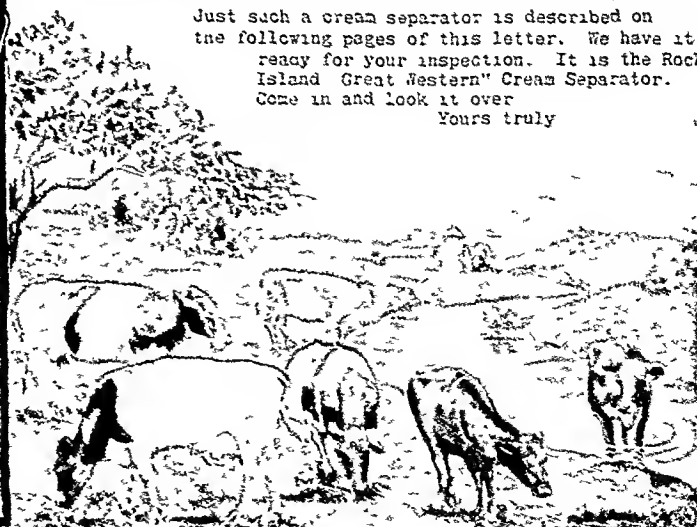
Just such a cream separator is described on the following pages of this letter. We have it ready for your inspection. It is the Rock Island Great Western Cream Separator. Come in and look it over.

Yours truly

## THICK PEA SOUP WITH CROUTONS

- 1½ cups split peas.
- ½ teaspoon fresh or dried mint (optional)
- 3 pints liquid from boiled ham or corned beef.
- 1 tablespoon flour.
- ¼ teaspoon pepper

Wash the peas very thoroughly, soak over night in cold water, and bring to boiling point in the water in which they were soaked. Add with mint to the meat liquid which has been skimmed and from which all superfluous fat has been removed. Cook until the peas are tender, then rub through a sieve. Moisten the flour with a little cold water, stir into the boiling soup and boil five minutes. Add pepper (and salt) if needed—the meat liquid may be salt enough—and serve with croutons.



# ROCK ISLAND CREAM SEPARATORS

**A Great Western**

**Easy to Operate  
Easy to Clean**

**Self-Draining Bowl  
Gets More Cream**

Ball-bearing construction -  
easy running - low down, en-  
closed, self-oiling gears.

Convenience in operating  
low down supply cut low down,  
slow speed, close-shutting per-  
fect flushing, self-cleaning bowl,  
4 sizes - 400, 650, 725 or 900  
pounds per hour capacity.

Ask about the power attach-  
ment or the electric motor drive.

\* \* \* \* \*

**More Money In  
Butterfat from the  
Same Amount  
of Milk**



*Get all the Cream*

INSIDE SPREAD OF FOUR-PAGE LETTER TO FARMERS

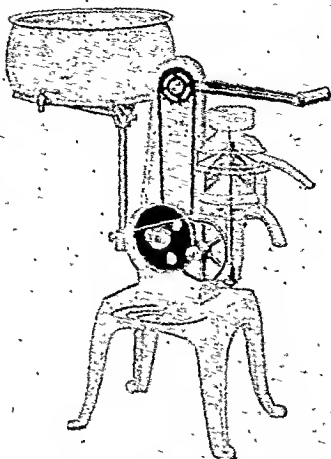
# Increases Your Daily Harvest

## Rock Island Great Western Cream Separator

With the Rock Island skimming device you take advantage of the law of gravity. It assists you in the job of skimming, because the Rock Island works in the most natural way, the cream going up through the upper outlet and the skimmed milk down through the bottom outlet. Bottom outlet for skim milk makes a self-draining, easy cleaning bowl.

The smooth surface of the frame and the open sanitary base make it an extremely simple matter to keep the outside of the machine in spotless condition.

The chain drive is most simple. The chain follows its track on the sprockets with practically no friction or binding, runs at a very low speed, requires less lubrication, and operates the separator smoothly, easily and quietly. Chain is entirely enclosed and **GUARANTEED FOREVER** against BREAKAGE.



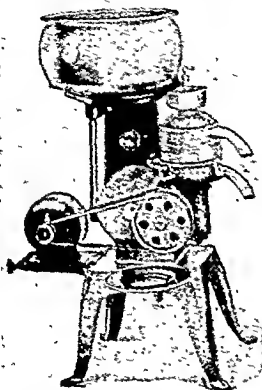
Skeleton view of Rock Island "Great Western" Cream Separator

### Put Your Engine to Work

**Power Attachment :** The Rock Island Special Universal Power Attachment has proved to be a most satisfactory device for the purpose of driving cream separators by mechanical power. With this device the separator can be driven direct by a gasoline engine without irregularity of speed or danger of injury to the separator due to shocks and jerks caused by the explosion impulses in the engine cylinders. Any other mechanical power can be used equally well, such as the steam engine, steam turbine, electric motor, tread power, line shaft, etc.

The pulley mounted on the lever acts as an automatic belt tightener. Proper lubricating facilities are provided for all moving parts on this attachment, and if properly lubricated it will last a great many years.

This attachment is placed very low, at a point where the separator is most rigid. No destructive shocks or vibrations are communicated to the bowl, provided, of course, that the machine is fastened down securely on a solid foundation.

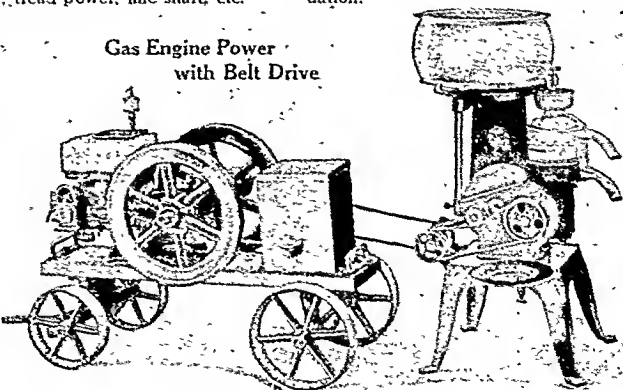


#### Direct Motor Drive

When the Rock Island "Great Western" Cream Separator is motor driven, all jerks and shocks are taken care of by a spring-cushioned arrangement placed beneath the motor base, which, together with the motor, slides freely on top of the motor bracket, fastened directly to the separator base.

The fact that the spring tension is applied directly to the motor (thereby converting the motor itself into a cushioned belt tightener) makes it possible to eliminate several extra parts, such as idler pulleys, rocker arms, etc., which generally project and interfere with keeping such devices in a clean and sanitary condition.

#### Gas Engine Power with Belt Drive



**Come In and Inspect This Cream Producing Separator**

1. Will the goods sell readily?
2. Will their quality, price and other features satisfy my trade, thus making for repeat orders, and increasing the turnover of the stock?
3. Will their sale bring me substantial profits in a comparatively short time?

The number of offers which a dealer receives is naturally large. The letter that carries a sales appeal to him must therefore compete with numerous other letters for the reader's attention and interest. To accomplish these ends, mechanical means in the form of illustrated and colored letterheads, odd, attention-catching inclosures, and original advertising folders are oftentimes used with good results. On the other hand, even though this type of prospect is besieged by offers, he is, in most cases, willing to listen to new proposals, provided they merit investigation.

The dealer is presumably a busy man. A businesslike approach that will save him time and effort is therefore necessary in his case. Applied to letters this means brief messages which strike at once at the heart of the subject matter, which may be read, understood, and acted upon in a few moments. One-page letters will usually accomplish this best.

Being daily approached and interviewed by salesmen and solicitors, and being the recipient of many written offers, the dealer is accustomed to language that is snappy and stimulating. A few breezy colloquialisms and timely slang expressions used in the right place and at the right time are likely to strengthen the general appeal of the letter by giving it individuality.

The tone and spirit of the letter to the dealer should be similar to that of personal selling talk. The salesman makes a courteous, energetic, man-to-man appeal, into which he injects "life" and enthusiasm. Correspondingly, the tone of the silent salesman's talk should be such as to win the reader's good-will immediately by expressing a desire to render courteous, satisfactory, and mutually profitable service.

In the case of a new line of goods for which there is no well-established demand, and the sale of which is uncertain, the dealer must be assured of the seller's coöperation before he can be expected to place an order for such goods. That is one reason why manufacturers and wholesale distributors maintain well equipped dealer service departments, the function of which is to help the retailer move the goods from his shelves into the hands of his customers, and to aid him in every other possible way.

Such dealer helps take the form of national and local advertising in magazines and newspapers, of attractive advertising material for the



8. The Walker house paper every month.

9. Financing Service—arrangements made for handling all your time-payment paper at no cost to you.

Remember, the full benefits of this Service will be yours the moment you join our band of satisfied Walker representatives.

Why not talk the matter over with our salesman who is on the way now? It won't cost you anything and may benefit you greatly.

Just drop the enclosed card in the mail NOW.

### EXAMPLES OF LETTERS TO DEALERS

The purpose of the letter given below is to pave the way for the wholesaler's representative:

#### I

We want you to know us.

Because you have been selected as the dealer in your territory who is best suited to handle the Weller & Waller line.

Because our advertising is producing a demand for Weller & Waller merchandise that will wear and give satisfaction.

Because our advertising is producing a demand for Weller & Waller shoes that you cannot afford to turn away from your store.

Because we relieve you of the expense and necessity of carrying a large stock of shoes by having a complete supply of all styles, widths and sizes at your service in Milwaukee, not more than a day's shipping time from your store.

Years of consistent advertising have made Weller & Waller shoes known throughout the country; their reputation for correct style, unusual comfort, and dependable value made them popular with "Every Member of the Family."

Let us show you how other merchants have made real achievements in towns of every size. Then let us demonstrate the results that could be accomplished in your store, if our sales and advertising methods were put to work in your interests.

Our men are on the road now—one of them will be near you in the next few days. A check mark on the self-addressed return postal which we are enclosing will bring our man to your door, or our catalogue in the next mail.

written offers that come daily to his busy desk. To counteract the negative influence of this prejudice against most offers, the seller by mail should emphatically stress the business man's need for the goods. Only to the extent to which his letter is successful in awakening and establishing a definite "Yes, I think I need it" in the reader's mind, will it be effective in securing a sympathetic consideration of its message. Even in the case of an article which costs but a few dollars, the business man will hesitate to buy unless he is sure that it will meet a definite, existing demand. Thus the appeal created to sell a book on letter-writing to the business man stresses need in this wise:

You need this book, because:

It will enable you to write better letters and so win more business.

It is written by practical men for practical men.

It is a good instruction and a handy reference book for your correspondents and stenographers.

It differs in certain important respects from books on letter-writing which are now on the general market.

Its price is reasonable.

A business man's decision to buy investments would largely rest on any or all of these reasons:

They are safe.

Their prices are below real value.

They afford an exceptionally good income.

Sentiment, as a rule, does not play a very conspicuous rôle in the appeals which finally influence business men to take buying action, at least so far as most articles sold by mail are concerned. Even the person selling "homes" relies largely on the reason-why appeal when he writes:

No investment is so secure and gives you such continuous satisfaction as the purchase of your own home.

A business man should always be given important reasons why he should pay out money for something—reasons based on facts which concern his essential needs—facts which he can substantiate himself if he so desires. He will, as a rule, be more favorably inclined toward an offer if it is

presented to him not as an expense, but as an investment, certain to yield dividends in some form which he can measure himself. Here is an appeal of this sort:

Would you overlook an investment paying 100%—or even 50% annual dividends? Then just read the following:

"You told us the Hand Addresser Machine would pay for itself in a year—even on a small list. Nine months after it arrived, it is due to pay a dividend of \$9.50—or 105% on our investment, because the machine is paid for in addition.

"It gives absolutely no trouble and we use it in innumerable ways—other than plain addressing.

"Leo Gilbert, Director of Sales,  
"The U. S. Register Company,  
"Eugene, Oregon."

One Hundred Five Per Cent Dividends in Nine Months!

In your own office this little Addresser will soon pay for itself—then give you big annual dividends besides. Can you afford not to make use of it?

Why tolerate slow, scratchy pens when the speed, economy, and neatness of the Addresser cost so little? By inefficient hand methods you can soon waste the price of the Addresser you need.

What questions have you—or points to bring up?

Let's get down to brass tacks. Use the Question Blank enclosed to write me. Will you—to-day?

The paint manufacturer "proves" his statements in this way:

We guarantee that if Cheer Gloss does not do everything which the enclosed circular claims it will do, we will gladly refund your money.

Samples of work done (usually by time and labor-saving office machines) form strong evidence because the reader can see and test it for himself:

Here is a payroll ADDRESSER plate—designed for CONVENIENCE and ECONOMY in handling a payroll list.

---

Attached is a sheet of figures such as you have in your own business. The time given is that of just a fair operator, and yet you realize that this time is very fast.

Even testimonials—so much abused in the past—are included in letters to business men as good proof. They are especially valuable when they clearly establish the identity of the satisfied customer, and when the latter is a man more or less prominent in business:

Mr. J. B. Lange, General Manager of the Johnston Chemical Company, Milwaukee, once thought of the ADDRESSER merely as a speedy and economical means of addressing their thousands of monthly statements to customers.

But a short time after he had installed it, Mr. Lange knew differently. Then he wrote us:

"The ADDRESSER not only saves us a great amount of time, but our statements now go out looking 50% neater than when addressed in longhand or by the typewriter. And it didn't take us long to figure out that this machine would be a great time saver in our payroll department. Now we use it to list payroll sheets, address time clock cards, and other forms. The ADDRESSER has more than paid for itself in that department alone."

## EXAMPLES OF SALES LETTERS TO BUSINESS MEN AS CONSUMERS

I

Dear Sir: .

No matter how much money you have, you like to feel you're getting good value when you spend it.

If you buy stocks and bonds, you make sure there's something more than blue sky behind them;

when you buy automobile tires, you insist on guaranteed mileage, backed by a maker you have confidence in.

It's the same way with clothes. You want to know you're getting all-wool materials, good style, fine tailoring—a guarantee of satisfaction.

You do know you're getting all these things when you buy a Fox & Brown suit here. If, at any time, you feel that you did not get full satisfaction, all you have to do is tell us, and we'll refund your money.

The new fall clothes are here now. We're sure you'll like them. We're selling them on a very small margin of profit.

Come in and let us show you what "getting your money's worth" in clothes really means.

*Letters to Salesmen*

The salesman is the personal link between the house and its customers. He is on "the firing line" of the business. The results of his day's work are measured by the number of bona fide orders he reports every night. His lot is by no means a rosy one. So far as his firm is concerned, he "absorbs most of the shocks." If business conditions are depressing in a certain locality, he is the first to hear the news and to feel its effect; if competitors have succeeded in selling one of his customers their line, he gets the blame first-hand; if the prospect is pessimistic, or critical, or angry, or "just cold," the salesman must accept him as he is, and turn the situation to his advantage diplomatically and unflinchingly. Moreover, every salesman meets with a certain number of turn-downs each day, failures which he must analyze so as to avoid them in the future. At times, he must put up with poor accommodations in cheap hotels in small country towns. Most of the time he is far away from his home and family—a stranger among strangers.

The wise sales manager realizes these and other difficulties which his men face daily on the road, and which they must overcome if they want to win business. He knows full well that a message of hearty cheer and practical encouragement has frequently the power to send the firm's representative out in the morning from his hotel to his day's work smiling and with the firm determination to get the business. To the man in the field, who has just risen after a restless night in an uncomfortable bed in an out-of-the-way country town, with his nerves on edge, his optimism gone, and his mind already made up that so far as his line of goods is concerned the town is "dead," and that conditions are against him, such a message, handed him by the hotel clerk in the morning as he comes downstairs from his room, ready to enter the dining-hall for his breakfast, is a long-distance, "Good Morning! Let's start the day right" handshake from the sales manager. The recipient reads it while enjoying his morning meal. It comes from one who has been "up against" similar disappointments, who has had to answer similar objections, who has met with similar rebuffs, from one who fully understands the reader's situation, and who is therefore sympathetic.

And the man at home puts courage into his message to the man on the road, and inspiration and optimism—vital qualities that make for selling success. He is in close, constant touch with his men. They feel the hearty grip of his hand, the friendly pat on their shoulders; they catch the spirit of his enthusiasm over the house and its goods, of

his courage to stand up in the face of seemingly adverse business conditions, and of his capacity for hard, unflinching duty—all this they get from the letters he so regularly writes them. And the inscrutable, analysis-defying power that characterizes the lines of the sales manager's personal letters to his men, that makes them want to live up and work up to his expectations, is the attractive force of his personality. For, only he who possesses a magnetic personality, who knows men, who can lead them, because he knows them, and who is able to project a vital part of his own self in black on white, can write letters to salesmen which will tend not only to keep them in line, but which will show them also how to become bigger men and better producers. Such rare character qualities are not to be found in the average business correspondent.

Letters to salesmen are therefore, and should be, written only by men of practical selling experience who have a thorough understanding of their problems. Coming from a man who himself has been "up against it" out in the field, the message carries weight and authority: it inspires confidence. Instead of its being so many paragraphs of "hot air" wrapped up in high-sounding phrases by a theorist who, seated in a comfortable office chair, has never felt the sting of being "turned down," it represents the practical advice and viewpoint of a man of wide business experience, far vision, and sympathetic grasp of problems in selling.

Letters to salesmen give a variety of essential information. There are:

1. Letters impressing upon the reader the general selling policy of the house, giving him new "talking" points, or fresh, effective answers to objections, and providing him with data concerning the competitor's selling methods and goods.
2. Letters concerning general and special conditions prevailing in the salesman's territory, and also concerning customers and prospects in that territory.
3. Letters to inspire the man in the field, to instruct and so to help him with special reference to the kind of work he is doing, as shown by his reports and letters.

Letters to the firm's representatives have here been grouped into three classes mainly for the purpose of clearness and better understanding. As a matter of fact, a letter of this kind may touch on any one or all of the general subjects mentioned in this group.

The language to be used when writing to the firm's traveler should be simple, direct, and crisp. Special trade expressions and "snappy" colloquialisms are effective if used moderately, not for the sake of mere effect, but for the sake of better understanding, for closer personal contact. The tone of the letter should be such as to put the reader at ease, to inspire him

with confidence in the writer and his methods, and to create in him respect for both. It should be "talkative," sincere, optimistic, expressing confidence in the salesman's ability to make good, and make him feel that the sales manager and the firm are with him in his every effort. In short, it should be in every respect encouraging. Note the cheerful, "talkative" tone of the following letter, written to a man who had been in the field only three or four weeks. Its purpose is to spur him on to greater and better efforts:

Dear Mr. Allen:

Congratulations on your report for the week ending June 28.

Eleven orders out of twenty-two canvassed is a good percentage. Now determine to improve still more, to make your average two orders a day. We believe that you can reach fifteen orders a week.

We realize that your earnings last week were \$43.49, or an average of \$7.25 a day. Now that is certainly good after three or four weeks' experience. You are earning almost \$200 a month, Mr. Allen, which is far better than the writer did during his first month. We feel sure that you are going to make this \$250 a month within the next week or two. Believe you can do it very easily. You have made a good beginning now, and will find it decidedly easier to improve your work from now on.

Keep the ball rolling a little faster each week. Now see if you can't reach a total of fifteen orders and catch up with Mr. Nutting, who landed fifteen orders last week. Mr. Reinhart secured six or seven orders last week; so you and he are running neck and neck. See if you can't beat him.

Yours very truly,

The purpose of the following message is purely inspirational. It is one of a series of written sales talks which the men in the field receive at regular intervals.

Dear Mr. Moore:

Subject: IMAGINATION

It was a stony hillside farm, ten miles from a railroad. Its fences were broken down, its fields in weeds, and its buildings dilapidated.

It had one redeeming feature. It was beautifully located. Its pasture land in the back was



cut by a stream starting high up in the hills. Chestnut trees grew along its banks and scores of black and gray squirrels jumped from limb to limb.

But it was a wasted and neglected farm and the countryside averred that "the land was no good."

A man I know bought this farm. He built fences, cut weeds and brush, picked stones, fertilized and plowed the fields, repaired the buildings, bought cattle and sheep and almost overnight by work and thrift transformed it. It produced corn, wheat, potatoes, and timothy in abundance.

Other men looked at this farm and saw it in a worn-out and broken-down condition. This man looked at it and saw green fields, waving corn, long rows of rank and heavy potato vines, and he TRANSLATED HIS VISION INTO REALITY.

Salesmanship to be effective must have in it vivid imagination. Dream out your dreams, then bring them into reality by initiative, courage, and hard work.

Cordially yours,

The following letter is designed to help the salesman in his work:

Dear Mr. White:

Did you ever go into a store when the business was so dead you wanted to walk on tiptoe?

The proprietor is not thinking of buying goods. He wants to sell them. He wants customers.

Now is the chance for you to show your salesmanship. A chance for you to bring his business to life and get him out of the rut. It's your only chance for an order. Get customers for him.

Go out and take a look at the windows. They probably look as down in the mouth as the proprietor feels. Would they coax you in? Size up the town. Does it look dead, too? You can help ginger it up.

Ask permission to put in a window display of our clocks. Have the boy get the stock out and help you. Get the bottom of the window spick and span. Then build up a display along the lines suggested in our window display book. Use some posters and motto cards. Get it snappy and attractive. Make it the liveliest thing on the street.

You'll have the proprietor interested before you are well started. As the window is brightened up, you'll see his face brighten too. He'll begin

to think he is busy and will most likely loosen up for an order. Even if he doesn't, you have made an impression on him that will stick.

You've done something different. You've impressed him strongly with Bestclox push and enterprise. When he needs alarms he'll have a hard time to think of anything but Bestclox.

Yours very truly,

The following correspondence—a salesman's letter to his manager and the latter's reply—appeared in *Letters That Win The Coöperation of Salesmen*.<sup>\*</sup> It illustrates well one of the most difficult types of letters which a sales manager is called upon to write.

*The salesman's appeal*

Dear Mr. Young:

You know from our heart-to-heart talk a year ago that I am trying to start young enough so that I can get off the road at fifty. Just to bring myself up to date, here is my financial statement:

Company stock	\$4,600
Savings bank	2,800
Undeveloped real estate	800
Bonds	700
Christmas club (for a year)	208

In addition, I have two policies totaling \$5,000—straight life; one endowment policy maturing in fourteen years, for \$1,000; besides some pay-as-you-go accident insurance.

You told me last year that I had too much of an investment in company stock in comparison with my other assets, and I am willing to take your judgment that you are wise in not letting me buy more on our instalment plan. While I have passed by many opportunities to diversify my modest assets; and the undeveloped real estate item, as you know, is a seashore lot left me by an uncle, I want now to borrow \$1,200 from the company, to be repaid within a year by deductions from salary. I am swinging in connection with coöperative banks and the Christmas Club everything that I should now have as regular payments, and it is going to be pretty tough sledding for me to find \$25 every week to repay the loan.

But here's the proposition that I want to accept. In all my territory there is just one town

<sup>\*</sup> Published by the Policyholders Service Bureau of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company.

So far as extending a line of credit to your cousin is concerned, we'll not only give him credit, but—something that we don't do once in a blue moon—give 180 days' dating on the initial order. Now don't, please, consider this an authority for you to offer 180 days, and please don't think that I am breathing hot one moment and cold another, for only last week I turned down Burlingame and dating, and gave them only our usual maximum of sixty days.

You are dead right about the need of an adequate outlet for us—and for others—in Jonesville.

So much for that!

Now, here is another side of the picture. You are free, white, and over twenty-one. You can sell company stock if you wish and put the \$1,300 into the business. But there is something just a little unethical about one of our salesmen holding a share of the business of one of our customers. It's just the difference between a shirt fresh from the laundry and one which has been worn a day. The one you have worn a day may look clean—if there is no comparison—but the shirt fresh from the laundry proclaims to everybody its immaculateness.

It is only by putting the situation under a microscope that the real condition can be seen. For example, here I sit at my desk with the statistics which leave no doubt in my mind as to towns with poor outlets for our merchandise. In fact, if you will remember, I put the Jonesville situation before you when you first took over the town—but without making any suggestions, as I wanted you to do that after you had looked the town over for yourself.

So I could very easily and very certainly pick out 100 towns in these United States that are Jonesvilles. I could pick out of the applicants for sales positions here—those who had parents or relatives who would come across with half the capital necessary to launch them in those towns which simply shriek for live wires. But what would you think of me if I were half-owner of 100 stores selling our lines? Wouldn't you feel that I was taking advantage of my position, and that inevitably what at first glance would seem a good thing for the house ultimately might work to its detriment?

Now here's what is going to happen if you accept my advice. You'll rustle around among your other relatives and pick out one who will invest \$1,300 in your place, on the strength of your opinion, backed up by the other facts you have given me. You will have all of the good-will of the ac-

## ILLUSTRATIONS

## A

A so called personalized form letter addressed to architects by a firm specializing in better house furnishings:

Dear Mr. Thompson:

To-day we wrote a letter to your client, Mr. James Leishman, offering to help in the planning and selecting of furnishings which will be in harmony with the architectural beauty of his new house, as you have planned it.

You, no doubt, are somewhat familiar with the national scope of our work and know of the many distinctive buildings we have furnished completely in Los Angeles, Hollywood, and Beverly Hills.

Naturally, we want to be of service to all who have a part in a building project—the owner, the builder, and the architect. Our desire is to supply, or design and manufacture, if need be, furnishings which will add most to the charm of the architectural style and give the most in comfort and in service to the owner.

It would be a privilege, reacting to your interest as well as ours, if we could bring to you and your client helpful ideas and suggestions. We should be pleased if you would let us know what plans you may have for the furnishing of this project so that we may work in perfect accord with you.

Very truly yours,

## B

A multigraphed letter addressed to physicians. Its date and inside address were filled in.

My dear Doctor Clark:

Who was the last client you advised to go to a higher altitude? And was it yesterday or perhaps to-day?

There are, of course, times in the life and practice of every conscientious physician when he feels that medicine alone is not getting for him the desired results. A change of scene and climate, together with restful surroundings, is often the very remedy his patient needs more than any other. Where to send him, however, and at the same time be able to keep in personal touch with his physical condition is a difficult problem to solve.

If you knew of a modern, restricted location, among live oak trees, at an elevation of some 1,800 feet above sea level, thirty minutes' drive from downtown Los Angeles, with pure soft water and in a zone selected by the Federal Government as the most healthful in the country, would it not solve your problem and that of your patients?

Every section but one of our city has been developed by subdividers. We have been active in that work for more than 25 years— in Hollywood, the Harbor, Verdugo Woodlands, and elsewhere. Crescenta Valley, however, is an outstanding exception. A population of 35,000 has settled there in search of health, and a recent survey has shown that the results have more than justified their selection, especially in cases of asthma, bronchial troubles, and rheumatism.

We are owners and developers of the cream of the section—Crescenta Oaks—and we earnestly request the favor of an opportunity to lay this matter before you. We ask it, not with the intention of selling anything, but simply that we may, in an honorable and ethical manner, exchange information that cannot help be of benefit not only to both of us, but in greater degree to such patients as we have described.

Will you, therefore, please fill out and return the enclosed card, and a courteous representative of this office will gladly call upon you at any time and place you may specify.

This cave is a lovely place. We have all sorts of toys, and we're sure you'll like them. There is a kind Play Lady to take care of all you little folks; so come to the Teddy Bear Cave.

With love

The Teddy Bears

When it comes to writing letters to children, there seems to be no age limit at which not to begin. A few days after children are born, letters are sent them in care of their parents. As a matter of fact, there is no age period in childhood at which department stores, for instance, do not attempt to reach boys and girls directly or indirectly.

In answering the question "Why a special technique for children?", a writer on the subject \* comments:

The answer, then, to the inquiry about the necessity for a special technique in writing for children lies in the psychology of the children themselves. To meet them on their own grounds we must approach them as equals, not as adults writing down to them. We must know their kind of dialogue, their demands upon action and climax, their sort of humor, pathos, sentiment, their requirements upon emphasis moral, educational, imaginative, or factual. Constantly in writing for children, an awareness of the psychology of the child at his different stages of development is necessary.

. . . Another characteristic of the child-reader, and this applies to well-grown youngsters too, is that he must have illustrations. Nor is this desire indicative of lack of intelligence. On the contrary, it is a grasp for something to develop his experience. Consider how little he has seen on which his imagination can build.

The purpose of most letters addressed to children is not to sell to them directly, but to interest them in the firm and its merchandise or service. Thus, premiums, miniature models of animals, soldiers, houses, furniture, etc., as well as contests and clubs of varied sorts are used to allure. Some retailers offer birthday gifts to their customers' children, for which they are asked to call personally. In this way, mother and daughter or father and son are often lured into the store, where they may be tempted to buy something.

To get a comprehensive view of the extent of this "youth market," one need only leaf through the advertising pages of children's periodicals. Here manufacturers of books, toys, dressware, and foods spread before the shining eyes of youth in word and picture their offerings in the hope of preju-

\* M. L. Robinson, *Juvenile Story Writing*, Ch. 1.

children should be largely of the emotional or short-circuit type, even though they are often made to sound logical. Among the appeals likely to prove resultful are those directed to imitation, curiosity, play, pride, and sportsmanship.

However, before appealing to any child by letter, even before placing its name on the mailing list, the business man should make absolutely certain not only that the name and address are correct, but that the child is still living! "Occasionally," says Collins, publicity director at Macy's, "we received a letter from a mother who deeply resented this kind of mail, and who informed us rather pathetically that the child had died. There must have been many others who had the same feeling of resentment, but who had not told us about it."

All children are by nature curious so that well-adapted questions and answers in almost any form are likely to be welcome reading. Radio programs for juveniles are largely based on this appeal. Letters designed to stimulate interest in contests and clubs of various sorts appeal to the reader's pride. The very receipt of a letter is likely to make a boy proud, since at least in this respect it makes him like an adult. Often the appeal to pride is combined with that to bravery: the youngster is told what a courageous lad and good sport he is to take knocks with a smile.

The appeal to play is used in various forms. Food manufacturers utilize it by sending charts to children on which they are to keep track of the amount of breakfast cereal or other food they eat. To interest the boy or girl, they make a game out of the activity of eating. In writing letters about toys or in telling youngsters how to make toys, the appeal to play can be used effectively. Since children learn largely through imitation, it is well to let them have their heroes and heroines in word and picture, whose model actions they may follow in some respects. Some years ago, there were literally millions of boys who wanted to be Lindberghs—brave and modest at the same time. They were very eager to follow his example in some way.

The following series of sales promotion letters was sent in care of parents of new-born children. Neatly multigraphed on tastefully illustrated stationery, these messages brought not only favorable comments but new savings accounts. They were written by a young woman with a knack for the juvenile style. It will be well worth the reader's time to study the appeal in these letters and to determine why they brought such favorable response.

\* Kenneth Collins, *Road to Good Advertising*, Ch. XVII, "What is Wrong with Direct Mail Advertising?"

you going to college on the money that is being put in your "college account" now?

Better ask Mother now and Daddy when he comes home this evening. Don't forget.

Many Happy Returns of the Day!

## C

Happy Birthday!

How's the boy? Getting to be a mighty fine young man, you are.

After you get tired of driving your Kiddy Kar around the parlor furniture, pull up alongside of me and let's talk business. There, that's fine.

Now then, if \$25 is annually placed to your credit at five per cent compound interest, you will have \$703.31 when you are twenty years old. Think of it—only \$25 a year, or a little more than two dollars a month will net that much.

How does that appeal to you? That money is going to come in mighty handy to you some day. Mother and Daddy won't miss it now—only fifty-two cents a week, but that fund will grow as steadily as you will grow. When you are ready to go to college, it will be ready to start you off. A larger monthly deposit will pay your way through college.

Now, you talk business with Mother and Daddy. Remind them that they put their hope and faith in you, that whatever success you attain is their good fortune also. Ask them to prepare the way for your success by providing for your college education NOW. Don't let them forget. Remind them every day—oh, let's say at breakfast—that you will want that money when the other boys, whose parents have already started their savings accounts, are leaving for college.

Many happy returns of the day!

THE WOOD SAVINGS BANK.

The appeals to curiosity, sportsmanship, and pride are all used to good advantage in the following letters of a food manufacturer. Observe how the boy is urged to make a sort of game out of the action—eating of Choice Cereal—which the seller wishes to effect. In order to obtain the title and the hat of a "head scout," he must, among other things, eat the manufacturer's food three times a week for four weeks. Were it not for this boyish



incentive, it might be hard to induce the lad to eat the same brand of breakfast food twelve times during a single month. In studying these letters, note the kind of words used as well as the pronounced personal appeal. They were signed by the "Grand Commander."

## I

Dear Friend:

I've heard that you're the kind of person who would like to be a member of our secret club.

It's called by the mystical letters H. C. B. And all over the country there are boys and girls like you who are members and who know the secret of those magic letters.

Do you like to run and to play games with all your might? Do you like to do well at making things, at reading and school work?

Then I'll tell you about joining the H. C. B. Club.

All its members want to be just as healthy as possible, because only healthy boys and girls really have fun. So here's what you do in the H. C. B. Club to make you the healthiest, happiest child in your whole neighborhood.

You must be sure to eat Choice Cereal for breakfast at least three times a week for four weeks. That makes twelve Choice Cereal breakfasts. Then, at the end of the four weeks, ask your Mother to sign the coupon at the bottom of this letter and mail it in to me with one package top.

When that package top and coupon reach me, I will send you a big envelope of exciting new material. First, there's a beautiful poster. Then, thrilling out-outs of Custer and his soldiers and the Indians. And last, your H. C. B. badge which you should wear all the time, together with the secret meaning of H. C. B. that only club members know.

Start to-morrow morning. Ask your Mother to give you a hot Choice Cereal breakfast so that you may become a member of the H. C. B. Club. And then be sure to send your coupon with a package top when you have your twelve bronze arrowheads for at least twelve Choice Cereal breakfasts eaten in the four weeks.

Sincerely yours,

Dear Colonial:

Like the men who marched under George Washington, you are now a Colonial. That is the title you hold as a full-fledged member of the H. C. B. Club.

See, here is your badge of membership. Here, too, is the wonderful set of cut-outs of General Custer and his men, and of Indian warriors, squaws and papooses. You can make them gallop over the plains and pitch camp and do all kinds of exciting things.

And sh . . . sh . . . there's a secret meaning to the magic letters of our club! Remember them? "H. C. B." Those letters really stand for these exciting words:

Health makes Colonials Brave!

The Colonials in early days struggled against proud King George of England. They were so strong and brave that they drove the Red Coats--as people called King George's soldiers--back beyond the seas.

Right now, boys and girls who are like the old Colonials, can do great things. If you keep healthy and husky, you'll have a chance to be like Lindbergh or Amelia Earhart. For health helps you to win right now in all your games.

Brave, sturdy youngsters, who are real leaders, are banded together in the H. C. B. Club. To keep their badge, they must keep growing and playing hard every day. And those who follow our secret rules can go on to win the second great honor of the H. C. B. They can become Head Scouts.

Those who take this greater honor get other awards, too. Head Scouts of our Club wear a special military hat. It's blue and gold--very smart. You'll be the envy of all the neighborhood when you get yours.

To win the title of Head Scout and this fine hat, you simply follow the three rules for Colonials:

1. Get fresh air and exercise--every day.
2. Sleep regularly.
3. Eat at least three Choice Cereal breakfasts a week for four weeks.

The Choice Cereal you eat need not be prepared in the same way all the time. Ask your mother to

victrola or radio) . . . If you decide they aren't, and don't succeed in talking yourself into the idea that "they'll do," come and see the Special we are featuring for the Michigan Cord Hop. Charter House Cords, regulation in every way, 20" bottoms, 2" cuffs, and as for wearing qualities—imitation iron. Cream, Sand, Castor, Camel. They're specially priced for the Junior-Senior Cord Dance . . . . at \$5.25.

According to a writer in *Printers' Ink*: "Youth is much concerned with externals, with things as they look. It is extremely personal in its applications. Youth's gods are popularity and social approval. No home has more artless and more outspoken critics than its young folks. Since the family cannot be discarded, it must be uplifted. In other words, youth is both a market in itself and a front door to the family market. The general formula is to build a vision in youth's mind, to make it vivid, and to keep it up-to-date. Youth wants pictures, not of the world it is living in so much as of its dream world. The boy wants pictures of the hero—the leader—of the clubman, sportsman, gallant, executive—in whom he can dream himself. The girl—of the society belle, the private secretary, the actress, the bride, hostess, sportswoman—who is her idea of a wonderful woman to be. And do not forget that style is almost the be-all and end-all of everything. Despite all this talk of the independence of the young generation, it is a slave to its own notions of what is fashionable at the moment."

While the foregoing is more or less subtle advertising propaganda, it gives nevertheless some good hints on the appeals likely to influence young people to buy.

Style is not the only talking point used by a university shop for men. Thus, conservative prices and a dignified sensible place are other attractions emphasized in the following letter. It furnishes a good example of a straightforward, man-to-man appeal, free from exaggerations and collegiate clap-trap.

Dear Mr. Cordelyou:

Have you been down to Lindeman's new shop for University Men?

It is beside the Men's Sportswear Shop—lower floor level, in the new Broadway Building. Look for the entrance on Broadway, just past Wilson Avenue—the entrance with the wrought-iron gates to the stairway leading down.

The Men's University Shop is neither a show-shop nor an exhibition room for pennants. It is a

There are endless ways of entertaining at the Lincoln. If I may be of assistance, please telephone me at Marchmont 6800, and I will make your reservation and personally see that every courtesy is extended to you.

Hospitably yours,

## PROBLEMS

### *Letters to Women*

1. The Manager of Westover & Root, Incorporated, your city, proprietors of a large, high-class grocery and meat store, has asked you to prepare a special sales letter.

This letter is to be sent to the housewives of your city about a week or ten days before Thanksgiving Day. Its distinct purpose is to induce these women to buy seasonable table necessities and luxuries.

In your letter create a seasonable spirit. Suggest, by means of fitting description, the purchase of a number of good things for your reader's Thanksgiving dinner.

2. You are employed as sales correspondent by the Marysville Chest Company, Marysville, Tennessee, sole manufacturers of the famous Red Cedar Chests. These chests are made from genuine Southern Red Cedar, which is the only variety of Cedar that is moth-repelling.

Your firm has no distributors or salesmen, but relies solely on advertisements, sales and follow-up letters to dispose of its output. It was organized in 1895. Since then its business has grown very rapidly. With the business of your firm has grown the reputation of Marysville Red Cedar Chests.

You are now asked to prepare an appeal directed to women of the better middle class for the purpose of interesting them in one of your chests. This letter is to be based on the four fundamental elements of the sale. Strongly appeal to your reader's imagination by drawing a vivid picture of the appearance of the Red Cedar Chest and the many uses to which it may be put.

Concentrate your written sales effort upon one or two of the following selling points of Marysville Red Cedar Chests:

a. *The chest is artistic and ornamental.* It combines elegance and beauty with character and dignity. It represents decorative furniture of the highest perfection.

b. *The chest lasts forever.* Since neither germs nor parasites of any kind can live on the cedar tree, it grows for many generations. A Marysville chest will outlive any other piece of furniture. It is a lasting gift.

c. *The chest is moth-proof.* It is made of genuine Southern Red Cedar, which is the only variety of cedar that keeps the moths away.

Moths, dust, and dampness have no effect whatever on a Marysville Chest.

d. *The chest saves storage expense.* Costly furs, plumes, woolen garments, and expensive evening wraps may be preserved in the Marysville Chest. The saving of storage expense which a Marysville Chest effects every year far exceeds its original cost.

All chests are sold on a money-back guarantee plan.

Write the letter.

*Note:* Before preparing this assignment, visit your local furniture store and ask to be shown if possible a Red Cedar Chest.

3. You are conducting a music store in your city. Recently Mrs. Elizabeth Schade, an old customer of yours, purchased some phonograph records in your store. While talking to your saleswoman, she mentioned the fact that her son, Paul Schade, whose twelfth birthday is approaching, is fast learning to play his violin well, and that he is longingly looking forward to the day when his mother will buy him a "real" violin. This conversation took place about three days ago. The birthday is in about ten days.

Your task is to write Mrs. Schade a letter for the purpose of bringing her back into your store for the purchase of a violin as birthday gift to her son. Being the wife of a retired banker, Mrs. Schade is well-to-do and can afford to present her son with a good violin.

Every violin in your studio has been judged and approved by Rudolph Heberlein, a violin connoisseur of international reputation. So carefully valued are your violins that you will take at any time any violin you have ever sold at its full original price in exchange for a finer instrument. You have in stock many new and old violins, ranging in price from \$50 to \$3500.

Do not mention prices in your letter. Merely suggest that you have many good bargains at the present time and that you would be glad to show them to Mrs. Schade personally. Emphasize the appropriateness of a violin as a birthday gift to her son and the lasting enjoyment and satisfaction he would derive from a really good violin.

In preparing this letter keep in mind the fact that its main purpose is to bring the reader into your store.

4. You are the manager of the Bright Studio, which makes a specialty of children's photos. You obtain information concerning births and marriages from the Vital Statistics Column of your local newspaper.

Write a letter to Mrs. M. Morrow, whose baby Walter will be six months old next Saturday, urging her to have his picture taken on that day.

You have found in your business that every mother holds in after years baby pictures as the most valued keepsakes.

In your letter say that Miss Swanson, your secretary, will gladly arrange for an appointment at the prospect's convenience. The telephone numbers of your studio are Pacific 8065 and Welmar 4895.

*Letters to Farmers*

5. The following general sales letter was sent to farmers to interest them in dogs. Criticize it; then prepare an effective letter to take its place.

Dear Sir:

In this letter we are going to tell you about what I think makes the very best heel driving cattle dogs and farm dogs you can buy. These dogs are genuine Old English Shepherds, but you will understand that there are no pedigrees with them. When it comes to farm dogs, watch dogs, and first-class cattle dogs, they have more grit and will stand more abuse than any of the other dogs unless it is the German Shepherds.

Shepherd Strong: He is a fine Old English Shepherd and as fine a worker as you will find anywhere. He is one of these stout built good working dogs that are not afraid of anything and that understand how to handle cattle. He will do more real work for you in one year and will save you more time than a good team of horses can. When a man has been working all day and can come in at night and tell his dog to get the cows for him and do it 365 days in the year, he is worth as much as two horses. It is a business proposition, a labor saver, and a money saver to have a dog like this fellow on your farm. He has been tried out thoroughly and we know him to be a first class worker in every respect and he is worth \$100 to you. He is a young dog only a year and a half old now.

Now you understand when we sell anything, we expect the cash for it and we do not sell anything until we receive our money. That is the only way we do business, so don't write and ask us to send you a dog C. O. D., for we do not know you and for all we know you may never call for the dog. We haven't got time to look up all of our customers, so we sell for cash only.

We crate the dogs in nice shape and guarantee them to reach you in good shape and we do not pay express charges on them, but if you buy a dog from us, we stand back of that dog and give you the worth of your money. We want your business and want to hear from you.

Your truly,

6. As correspondent of the Warner Publishing Company, publishers of *Efficient Farming*, a monthly periodical, 45 Liszt Place, Madison, Wisconsin, it is your duty to secure efficient subscription agents for your paper among farmers in various communities.

*Efficient Farming* gives the farmer those plans and ideas which will enable him to earn more money. It treats topics such as these:

How to use a tractor with profit.

How to write letters that sell farm produce.

How to get along with less farm help.

How to finance farm crops,

and many others.

Efficient Farming is \$3.00 a year. On each order which an agent takes he is allowed a commission of 50¢ which may be kept at the time the subscription is sent in. An additional 25¢ will be allowed when five subscriptions are sent in within a month, and still another 25¢ commission will be allowed when ten or more subscriptions have been taken. This extra bonus will be sent the agent on the fifteenth of each month following the receipt of subscriptions.

Working materials, including complete instructions, will be sent upon receipt of a one-dollar deposit. This money is returned to the agent as soon as he has sent in ten orders.

You are now asked to prepare an unsolicited letter to be used for purposes of inducing farmers to become agents for your publication. Make use of any of the data given in the above statement of the problem and supply such additional data as you deem essential to make your appeal businesslike and convincing.

*Letters to Business Men as Dealers*

8. Your problem is to interest a retail clothing merchant by means of a sales letter in American Ready-Made Clothes to the extent of inducing him to mail a return request (a postal card which you inclose) for your new spring catalogue.

American Clothes are made by the American Association of Tailors, a coöperative institution with headquarters in Cincinnati, Ohio.

*Special features:*

Prices reduced. Regular quality suits retail as low as \$20 with good profits to merchant.

Reasons for price reduction: Large quantity buying of raw materials; elimination of waste expenses.

American Clothes are nationally advertised. Spring catalogue is just off the press. Contains many illustrations of new models, etc.

*Objections to be overcome by your letter:*

1. Business is generally depressed at the present.
2. Satisfied with line of clothing carried at the present.

9. The Duro Woolen Mills, Tacoma, Washington, have just begun operation of their new, up-to-date factory. They manufacture Duro Flannel Blouses for men and boys. All flannel is made from pure wool, no cotton or waste being used.

Duro Flannel Blouses are made, finished, and packed with care. They are priced to yield the dealer a good profit.

Your problem is to write a letter to a retailer in a small town to prepare him for the visit of the Duro salesman, who will soon call on him with a full line of Duro Flannel Blouses.

Prepare the letter. Make it complete. Add details other than those given above.

10. Your problem is to write to an automobile tire dealer for the purpose of interesting him in tires to a point where he will return the card you inclose.

*Special objection to be met by your letter:*

We can sell lower priced tires and make more profit.

11. Your problem is to induce by means of a letter a retail grocer in California to send for a trial shipment of Meadow Condensed Milk, an Oregon product, known for its quality, fair price, and fair profit.

*Special objection to be met by your letter:*

We prefer to sell California Poppy Milk, a product of our own state.

12. Write a letter designed to interest a small town druggist in an agency for a well-known make of typewriter. Enumerate the benefits that such an agency will bring to him. Concentrate on a few.



As assistant to the manager of the Imperial Hotel you are now asked to prepare a letter which is to be addressed to the manager of the Russian Grand Opera Company, in care of the Baltimore Hotel, Seattle, Washington, for the purpose mentioned above.

Incorporate in your letter desirable features of your hotel service which are likely to appeal to theatrical people. Say that you would be glad to make special rates if as many as ten members of the Opera Company register at your hotel.

Write the letter.

16. Prepare a sales letter intended to interest a business man in the purchase of
- (a) A book on advertising or accounting.
  - (b) A subscription to a magazine.
  - (c) A filing system.
  - (d) Made-to-measure clothing.
  - (e) A season ticket to college football or other games.

Objections to be met by your letter are as follows:

- Problem (a) 1. I have a large number of books on this subject now.  
2. I don't think the book is worth the price.
- (b) I am a subscriber to those business magazines which I need in my business. I have no time to read any more or any others.
- (c) The price of your filing system is higher than that of other, similar systems.
- (d) I have bought ready-made clothing for the past fifteen years and see no reason why I should change now. Moreover, I think ready-made clothing is much cheaper than made-to-order clothing.
- (e) 1. I am far too busy to attend football games.  
2. The admission fee is too high.  
3. My wife does not care to see a football game, and I "hate" to go alone.
17. The Wellsville Mfg. Co., Parkersburg, Iowa, manufacturers of Wellsville collapsible open air houses, is desirous of promoting the sale of its product by means of an effective letter to a selected list of business men in Iowa, Illinois, and Nebraska. This firm has asked you to write the letter.

Before you write the letter, note the following data:

Wellsville Open Air Canvas Houses have a strong frame of spruce or cypress wood, which is light. The metal parts are made of steel. The house is easily put up and taken down, without the use of tools. The canvas is permanently attached to the frame work in sections, and in such a way as to prevent its shrinking or stretching. These houses

Urge salesman to analyze each canvass made with a view to finding out why he succeeded or failed. Mention the fact that a friend of his who is working in neighboring territory and who started to sell at the same time your reader did, is doing very well.

Let the tone of your letter be optimistic but firm. Prepare the assignment.

20. Your problem is to prepare a letter to be sent to all salesmen of a bond house, specializing in municipal bonds, for the purpose of discouraging misrepresentation of securities sold by them.

In your letter urge your reader to play the game fairly and squarely, not to concern himself with the other fellow's business, and under no circumstances to misrepresent any securities in making sales. Say that a good principle to follow in selling is: "Be sure you are right, then fight with all your might."

Your letter is to be headed "Confidential to Salesmen." Write it.

21. You are the assistant to the sales manager of a firm manufacturing shaving cream and selling through salesmen to druggists. Your sales manager finds that most of the members of his force do not realize the importance of getting the clerks in the prospects' stores to work for them.

Your superior has just told you that 90% of all manufactured goods are sold over the retailer's counter and that only 50% of the persons that enter the store purchase before leaving. This percentage can in his opinion be increased by training the drug clerk to be more efficient. Among the things which every salesman should impress upon the clerk at every opportunity, and which will result in more sales of the firm's shaving cream sooner or later, are these:

It always pays to be courteous.

The customers judge our establishment by what they think of me.

An old customer is a new customer who has been treated with respect and courtesy.

Unless I, the clerk, believe in the quality of the goods which I sell, I cannot expect my customers to believe in it.

A customer is satisfied only when he returns to make another purchase.

You are now asked to put the information given above in the form of a letter to the sales force of your firm.

22. Business conditions in the country in general seem somewhat depressed. Your firm, the White Gas Engine Company, of your city, finds that its salesmen have difficulty in meeting the all too common objection "business is poor—we are not buying anything" effectively.

As a matter of fact, the volume of business which your firm is doing at the present time is very satisfactory. But more important is the fact

that the White Gas Engine Company is breaking ground for a new factory—a building 140 feet wide and 612 feet long—to care properly for its ever increasing volume of business.

This building is an ADDITION to your factory.

Your problem is to put the information given above into the form of an effective letter to the firm's salesmen, a letter that will leave no doubt in the reader's mind that business is *very satisfactory* indeed. With the letter send a newspaper clipping bearing on the construction of the addition to the factory.

### LETTER FOR ANALYSIS

#### 23. Dear Mr. Brown:

The actor with one play can only draw the crowd that likes his kind of show.

Vaudeville gets everybody. There is something in the program that appeals to every one.

You can appeal to every kind of a buyer with Bestcloz. You can sell the exclusive jeweler—the five and ten-cent store and everything between.

Get all the information about your customer that you can before you tackle him. Study his windows and the kind of goods in them. See whether to talk price or quality or both.

You have a variety of goods and can talk from any angle. Line up the kind of talk to fit him and connect it right to his store in some way.

Make him feel that you have studied his trade and know its demands.

Follow the line of least resistance and you get quick action on the order blank.

If you will spend a few minutes preparing the stage—deciding on the show and choosing the cast of characters, you'll save hours of argument and show better box office receipts.

How do you do it? Read the windows. There's as much store character in show windows as there is human character in a man's face. The windows are easier to read.

Yours very truly,

#### *Letters to Professional Men*

24. Prepare a single-page letter designed to induce its recipient to send the assistant manager of the subscription department of the Literary Digest, Time, or a similar magazine, a three-month subscription. Enclose a stamped return card entitling new subscribers to the special rate of \$1 for three months. Enclose also a set of testimonial letters complete with dates and names and addresses of the givers.

Write separate appeals for the following classes of prospects:

- a. lawyers
- b. high-school teachers
- c. doctors

With your assignment submit a list of the major and minor selling points of the particular magazine you choose to sell.

25. The Roosevelt Life Insurance Company, with branch offices in your city, is planning to bring a special retirement-income policy to the attention of professional men in your locality who are in good health and not over 35 years of age. This policy provides a regular monthly income at age 55 or 60. It is issued only to preferred risks and at an especially favorable introductory rate.

You are now asked to write a letter to a carefully selected list of lawyers, doctors, teachers, dentists, or ministers with a view to inducing them to grant one of your representatives an interview during which he can personally explain the advantages of the policy. Write such a letter as will induce the reader *to want* to grant an interview. Supply all other needed data yourself.

26. A new and very accessible golf course has just been completed near your city. It is up-to-date in every respect. The management offers an especially reasonable monthly rate to attract members.

Prepare a letter to be sent to a list of local professional men who are not only ardent golfers but who reside in the vicinity of this splendid new course. In your letter describe the location and various attractions of the course vividly and specifically. Supply all necessary information to make your letter comprehensive. A well-known professional golfer has been engaged to give instruction to those wishing it. Emphasize the low monthly rate prevailing now.

### *Letters to Children and Young People*

27. A city photographer who specializes in child portraiture has obtained a list of the names of fifty children who will be three years old in the near future, and whose parents are well-to-do.

Prepare a series of three letters designed to induce the mothers of these children to have them photographed on their next birthday.

Before writing these letters, submit a definite plan for this campaign, giving outlines of selling points to be used in each letter, method of reproducing the letters, and other necessary information.

28. The publishers of *Nature Magazine* wish to extend their subscription list to include the names of older boys and girls interested in flowers, birds, trees, and nature in general. They have procured a good mailing list through a recent prize contest.

Write a letter suitable for either a boy or a girl in grammar or high school. Offer a six-month subscription at a reduced rate, or some other

inducement. Before preparing this assignment, be sure to familiarize yourself thoroughly with the contents of several recent issues of *Nature Magazine*.

29. The Cycle Shop, your city, is discontinuing its entire line of bicycles. Write a letter to boys of grammar and high school age to induce them to look at the bicycles, which are new, greatly reduced in price, and guaranteed against mechanical defects. The sale is to last only ten days, and the number of bicycles is very limited. All sales are for cash, and no bicycle is returnable.
30. The university bookstore, your city, has on hand a lot of 150 slightly shelf-worn copies of Roget's "Thesaurus of the English Language," which it will sell at a 40% discount.

Write a letter to a list of university students taking courses in business English and correspondence that will prompt them to come to the store and buy the book.

31. An exclusive suburban restaurant is planning to feature special collegiate dinner dances each Friday night. It has decided to announce the details to all fraternities of the local college or university by letter. The opening dinner dance, to be held next Friday, is to be a gala occasion in many respects.

Draft the letter, supplying all necessary descriptive details.

## CHAPTER XVII

### FOLLOW-UP LETTERS

#### *The Necessity for Follow-Up*

Not every interview secured by a salesman brings a signature on the dotted line nor does every sales letter sent out result in favorable action. Most salesmen's efforts do not stop with one interview, and likewise most sales correspondents' efforts should not end with one letter.

If the single sales letter brought, say, 3 per cent returns, this by no means implies that the 97 per cent of persons who failed to answer this first appeal are not prospects. They may not have replied simply because the letter was not strong enough to overcome their inertia, because they want more information or more time before reaching a decision, or for some other good reason. In spite of all that, they may still be logical, prospective buyers for the seller's goods. The fact that a person written to once has not replied favorably is in the case of most offers made by mail not sufficient cause for removing his name from the list of prospects: it should, on the other hand, prompt the writer to extend and to vary, and so to follow up, his original appeal in the hope of finally getting favorable action.

He who prepares to reinforce and follow up his initial sales letter is much like the detective who, in an effort to solve a mystery, has been given a clue to work on and has been told to bring his man in dead or alive. So far as the letter-writer is concerned, his clue is either fresh or faint. If it is fresh, tangible, probably in the form of an inquiry, a request for further information or prices, then his task is to convert the inquirer's first interest in the goods into active buying desire for them. For this purpose he has the contents of the prospect's letter to go by: he is working on a definite "lead." In most cases, however, the letter-salesman's clue is faint in that it rests merely on the general knowledge that John Miller, whose name is on the firm's mailing list, belongs to a certain group of persons and is at some time or other likely to be in the market for the seller's merchandise. But no matter, whether fresh or faint, the writer will continue to follow it up persistently, doggedly, and will stop only when he has the order safely tucked away, or when he is absolutely convinced that

the person written to is not a prospect for his goods, and so strikes his name from the mailing list.

Follow-up letters represent continual efforts to sell a certain individual. They are sales letters in that each individual member of the series is usually intended to close the transaction. This does not mean that every follow-up letter is a complete sales letter designed to perform the four functions already discussed. It does imply, however, that every follow-up letter represents a separate, distinct sales effort, a complete unit in itself, and is, so far as the prospect is concerned, the seller's *very last* effort to get him to buy. It is clear that nothing would be more fatal to the success of such a letter than to let it create the impression that it is incomplete and likely to be followed by other letters if the recipient will only put off taking action long enough.

### *The Need for Variety and Repetition in Follow-Up Letters*

The elements which characterize follow-up sales letters and which make them far more effective than single sales letters are repetition and variety. A college professor who during several successive summer vacations had been employed as guide to parties traveling abroad conceived the idea of organizing his own private parties. He had a folder printed giving the special features of the trip as well as the complete itinerary. This together with a brief sales letter he sent to acquaintances and friends with a view to interesting them in his private tour to Europe. His scheme was only moderately successful. One day this man's eyes were opened to the value of follow-up sales letters and their particular advantages over his present and inadequate method of appeal. A number of follow-up letters, each stressing certain benefits and pleasures to be derived from the trip, each presenting to the reader sights rare and new, and experiences worth while to be enjoyed in foreign lands in the company of an experienced, educated guide, and each urging the recipient to reserve a place on the party by making a substantial deposit, were prepared. The individual letters of this series were alike in that each placed emphasis on the outstanding features of the trip, such as its educational benefits, its low cost, etc., and in that each letter spurred the reader to immediate action—to sign up for the trip. They were unlike one another in that each member of the series, in addition to emphasizing the most important advantages of the tour, pictured to the reader a different part of the journey, guiding him from one country into another, and so giving him a foretaste of the *variety* of pleasure and recreation that was in store for those making the journey. Actual photographs taken on prior journeys were used to supplement the word picture of each letter, and testimonials from

well-known persons, who in former years had journeyed abroad with this guide and had found the pleasure both exhilarating and educating, were made a part of some of the letters. Inclosures in the form of well-illustrated, descriptive booklets were also used. Neatly typewritten on good paper, these letters were sent to a small, but carefully selected list of prospects. The results of this limited, but well-thought-out campaign were so gratifying as to establish at once the superiority of the follow-up letters over the single sales letters which had previously been used. Repeated and varied appeal, in other words, won over single, unvaried effort.

Repetition and variety lend the sales follow-up letter both its opportunity and its pulling power. Just as the eager trout fisherman casts his fly or coachman on swift mountain waters again and again, first here, then there, but each and every time hoping and endeavoring to land a wriggling, silvery trout, so should the letter-salesman send out letter after letter, pile argument on argument, add selling point to selling point, in constant, searching endeavor to win the prospect over by means of agreeable, tactful, and well-timed persistency. And again, just as the angler changes his bait when the fish cease to bite, so should the correspondent change his appeal when orders fail to materialize in sufficient numbers. Objections to buying must be anticipated and answered as the follow-up campaign progresses.

If an important sales argument is to be repeated and so stressed in a number of letters, the writer should, if possible, present it each time from a fresh viewpoint, using different words and phrases in each letter, and so make each appeal a message interesting, independent, and complete in itself. Just as the successful salesman is always particular to keep some effective talking point in reserve in order to be able to stage an effective "come-back," should serious objections be raised to his offer, so should the letter-writer, instead of using up his best selling points in the first few letters of the series, withhold some strong arguments for his later appeals, which, it must not be forgotten, follow up *unsuccessful* previous letters.

Many business men who employ follow-up sales letters, frequently find it profitable even to vary the illustrations on the letter-sheet from one appeal to the other. Thus, in a campaign made to interest people in a special type of motor-car, each member of the series, while having the same general letterhead, bore in the lower left-hand corner of the sheet a striking illustration of the automobile in use. The motor-car was, of course, the same in each illustration, but the figures as well as their surroundings varied attractively in kind and color with each successive letter. Another means of injecting variety into the mechanical make-up of a series of letters is to give the reader the impression that more than one indi-



Negative reference to preceding letters, such as is used in the illustrations given below, has no attention or sales value whatever. In most instances, it is, in fact, an admission of the writer's inability to produce effective sales appeals. It should be avoided always. This is true likewise of statements casting discourteous reflection on the reader for not replying to previous communications. These are likely to antagonize, and so to nullify completely any further effort on the seller's part to approach the prospect with any degree of success.

You haven't answered our recent letter. You haven't sent for the new Master System of Play Writing. Your name is not enrolled in our Department of Personal Help. Naturally, we wonder why, knowing as we do, that you are so deeply interested in writing!

---

Did you receive our letter and booklet about our Gloves? I haven't heard from you, and I've been wondering if there could have been a slip-up in our organization, so that you failed to receive the booklet.

---

Our Mr. Blumberg advises me that he has written you three letters about our Guaranty Elevators, but you fail to reply. We can't understand why you don't take advantage of the opportunity to learn just what a Guaranty Elevator will do for you.

In following up solicited sales letters, reference to the inquiry is, of course, justifiable, though it can hardly be said to have as much effect in overcoming passive indifference and in securing interested attention as an original, ingenious opening sentence. Since the reader is under no obligation whatever to answer, however much initial interest in the seller's merchandise his inquiry may have disclosed, the writer should carefully refrain from complaining, or from affecting an attitude of having been wronged by the other person's apparent lapse of interest and his continued silence

#### *Positive Reference to the Inquiry*

A business man who, like yourself, had inquired about our Course, in a letter to me the other day made the following statement: "I appreciate that a knowledge of law is just what the business man needs—just what will make him a real executive, but I couldn't possibly devote three years to it. All I want is the law applicable to my business and I want to get it quickly."

Moreover, reference to printed matter should be made as easy as possible for the reader. Thus, he should be furnished with the exact number of the page on which he will find illustrated the kind of cedar chest or incubator he asked about, or the title of the chapter the perusal of which will answer in detail and to his satisfaction a question he raised in his inquiry. Inclosures, and printed matter in general, are sent for but one main purpose—to be read and so to help in stimulating an attitude favorable to buying action. Commonplace, vague, or general statements made concerning such sales literature will, in most cases, fail to do this, and unless the prospect is actually in need of the seller's wares, he will throw away the booklet or circular unread. Vigorous, precise, and detailed references, on the other hand, impress the reader by their very directness with the apparent value and importance of the printed information mailed him, and will in that way frequently secure for it a reading.

It should also be remembered that on the day on which a person asks for information regarding an article of which he has just read in an advertisement, and which he probably intends to purchase at an opportune moment, his desire to know more about it is (unless he is merely curious) in all probability, at its highest point. If the data could be supplied him on that very day, probably nothing more than a simple suggestion would be required to induce him to read an illustrated booklet or folder. As a matter of fact, however, often a week or even more time goes by before the information requested gets into his hands. In the meantime, other matters occupy his attention and crowd thoughts concerning the inquiry into the distant background of his mind. His interest, in other words, may wane to such an extent that he may not spend much time examining the sales literature, unless his need or desire for the goods is pressing, or unless the pleasure and the benefit likely to be had from such reading are suggested to him in the letter definitely and vividly.

18 and 19 is a detailed outline of our Service. Please read these pages carefully in order that you may gain an adequate appreciation of the completeness of the instruction and the broad scope of our Service.

### *The Length of the Follow-Up*

There is no fixed number of letters which might be taken as the standard. This means that the number of units in a series must be suited to the conditions surrounding the individual appeal; these are seldom, if ever, exactly alike, not even in the case of articles of the same kind. Among the important factors which are likely to affect the length of the follow-up, careful consideration should always be given to these: the general nature of the goods; their price; the margin of profit; the amount of time and information needed to educate the potential buyer in the subject; the type of prospect appealed to.

Thus, a correspondence school selling a course in shorthand makes use of a series of only three one-page letters. It obtains names of prospects from inquiries received in answer to magazine advertisements. The service which this institution, the scope and activities of which are rather limited, renders by mail costs its students the sum of fifteen dollars. The margin of profit on this course is fair. Little, if any, education is needed on the subject of shorthand, the value of which is now universally recognized. Another correspondence school, selling instruction in business letter writing, employs a series of seven, two-page follow-up letters. It also secures names of prospects by means of magazine advertisements. The margin of profit on this course, which sells for about one hundred and fifty dollars, is quite large. The prospects need little education in the value of the training given by this school. Moreover, in this case the seller as well as his service are well and favorably known. Again, the number of letters employed to dispose of a certain, inexpensive book was only three, while as many as ten, two and three-page letters were sent out to induce persons to buy a costly set of a well-known history of the world.

Where much preliminary education is required, the series is correspondingly longer. For instance, most people will hesitate a long while before entrusting their savings to an unknown bank in a distant city and state for deposit. It is clear therefore that before the prospect's account can be secured, his confidence in the bank and its officers must be won. Moreover, he must be shown the distinct advantage of doing his banking by mail. This requires much time and long, patient effort. It is not sur-

prising therefore to find a "correspondence bank" in its effort to swell its deposits by mail using a series of ten letters.

In cases where the reason-why appeal is used, and where the prospect is likely to act on the seller's offer only after thorough investigation, the series is, as a rule, fairly long. A financial institution employs six one-page units in its follow-up effort to dispose of high-grade bonds. A manufacturer of ready-made houses selling direct by mail uses five one-page letters.

The type of prospect to whom the appeal is to be made may also affect the number of members to be used in a given series. On the whole, one is justified in sending more messages to a farmer than to a business man, because the former is likely to want much more time in which to come to a decision than the latter. To dispose of a certain duplicating machine to business men, a series of four, crisp one-page letters is found very effective; while a manufacturer of separators selling direct to the user makes use of six two-page letters in his endeavor to close sales with farmers.

Only after a thorough study and a searching analysis of all the important conditions surrounding the sale of a given product have been made, can the number of links which a chain of written sales talks should have be determined with any degree of accuracy. What the ultimate number should be, and what number is likely to be the most productive and profitable, can be decided only by means of practical tests.

### *The Time Element in Follow-Up Campaigns*

*Time between letters.* Generally speaking, there should be sufficient time between the mailing of the various members of a series of letters to give the recipient ample opportunity to reply, and to avoid the possibility of his answer crossing the next follow-up unit in the mails. First of all, the distance between the writer and the reader must be thought of. If, for instance, a seller in New York has prospects, say, in Iowa and in California to whom the same follow-up letters are to be sent, then it is quite apparent that those living in California must be given on an average of at least six days more in which to reply because of their living at a greater distance from the seller.

Where the element of time itself constitutes an important inducement to buy, the interval between letters should, of course, be short. For example, a manufacturer of ready-made houses appealed to the bargain instinct of his prospects by offering them just two hundred houses at a cash discount of ten per cent. Letter 2 in this particular series urges prompt

buying because "102 of these 200 houses have already been disposed of," while Letter 3 proudly announces the fact that there are "Only 31 Houses Left!" In this series, the reader is given just enough time between letters to act promptly.

In general, it may be said that when the short circuit (emotional) appeal is used, briefer intervals of time should be left between the units of the series than when the written sales efforts are based on the long circuit (reason-why) appeal, on which the prospect is likely to act only after much and long consideration. And furthermore, where each letter must perform much educational work because of the reader's unfamiliarity with the seller's goods or service, it is best to allow for more time between the members of the series, in some cases as many as ten and fifteen days. Lastly, the amount of time in which the prospect ordinarily reaches a decision must also be taken into thought. Thus, it is well known that the business man does not use as much time in which to come to a decision as does the farmer. Follow-up letters to business men, therefore, should be mailed at shorter intervals of time than those to the men of the soil.

*Timing the arrival of letters.* The mailing of a sales or follow-up letter should be so regulated that the person written to will receive the message at a time of the year, part of the month, day of the week, or hour of the day, at which he is not only most likely to be free to give it undivided attention, but also at a time when he is likely to be in need of the seller's merchandise, and so in a receptive mood for his offer. The following examples will illustrate:

*The time of the year:* A large city business college has found that its sales and follow-up letters sent to grammar school pupils bring exceptionally good returns if they arrive not after graduation, but at least two or three months before graduation when the prospect is likely to be busy planning his future career.

*The part of the month:* The owner of a new city garage cashed in on the fact that his neighboring competitor's charges for monthly rental and storage were high, by sending two letters each month to all motor car owners in the district. The first letter was mailed about two days before the end of the month, while the second was sent out about a week later, after the prospects had received their monthly bills from the competitor. Both messages arrived at a time when their recipients were most likely to consider a change of garage service.

*The day of the week:* A road-house innkeeper times his sales letters to reach the homes of his prospects on Friday morning. They not only

announce the menu for the evening and for Sunday, but they also give road directions and telephone numbers for making reservations. The letters are mailed only when weather conditions are favorable for a pleasure trip on Saturday afternoon or on Sunday.

*The hour of the day:* An enterprising dairy owner selling his supplies in a fashionable district of the city where rather late breakfasts are in vogue makes use of follow-up letters to market his rich, pure country milk. He mails his letters in the afternoon so that they will be received during breakfast time the next morning, when his prospects are most likely to use and so to think of milk.

Sales letters to business men should be mailed to arrive on either Wednesday or Thursday of the week (provided these days neither precede nor follow a holiday, or the first or last day of the month) on which days they are likely to receive more consideration for the reason that routine work is light. On the other hand, letters to farmers should be mailed so as to get into their hands on Saturday or, if possible, on the day preceding a holiday, because they are likely to be given a thorough, leisurely reading on a Sunday or holiday.

### *Classes of Follow-Up Systems*

Systems of follow-up letters may be divided into three groups:

*The campaign follow-up.* This makes use of a definitely established, predetermined number of letters for a certain length of time in order to attain a definite end. The time element is the characteristic factor of this system, each unit of which follows in logical order, adding weight, information, and arguments to its predecessors, and so leading to action.

The specific purpose of the following series of letters, used with good results over a period of years by a manufacturer of floor materials, is to arouse the reader's interest to such degree that he will ask the former to send one of his local representatives. The first four letters of the series are addressed either to the school superintendent or else to the chairman of the board of education; the fifth letter is addressed to the architect of the new building; the sixth to contractors bidding on the building; the seventh to the successful contractor. The entire series is attractively multigraphed, dated, neatly filled in, and provided with pen-and-ink signatures. It constitutes a definite and well-planned campaign.

## I

Dear Sir:

We know that you will want your new School Building to be as up-to-date, efficient, and perfect in every detail as it is physically possible to make it. In helping you to accomplish this aim, we feel that we can be of definite assistance.

The question of the proper flooring is a most important one. Not only must the floors look well, wear well, and be easy to take care of, but they have a direct relation to the health and efficiency of pupils and teachers.

Resilient floors of Durex linoleum, Steplite Tile, or Kork Tile are smooth, crevice-free floors which are sanitary and non-absorbent, as well as easy to maintain in first-class condition. Their cork composition makes them comfortable and quiet underfoot.

We direct your attention to the fact that we not only manufacture resilient floors, but that we also arrange for their installation for you through our carefully selected Authorized Contractors.

It will pay you to discuss this important question of flooring with your architect while your building is still in the formative state, and to forward the enclosed card to us, informing us when we may be of service to you.

We want to be identified with the success of your undertaking and are confident that our materials, the workmanship of our Authorized Contractors, and their long, successful record warrant our asking for your favorable consideration.

Yours very truly,

## 2

Dear Sir:

The fact that Guaranteed Floors have been installed in hundreds of America's greatest skyscrapers and most prominent schools undoubtedly qualifies us to co-operate with you on floors for your new School.

But what is more important—the Franklin Floor Company and its Authorized Contractors have specialized in School Floors. The attached card gives you some idea of our school installation record—listing a few recent and representative jobs in your city.

Floor Company offers through its own organization and its Authorized Contractors.

1. Expert advice—one of our representatives will welcome the opportunity to go over every phase of your floor problem with you. He brings to you the combined experience of our nation-wide organization—what we have learned from hundreds of school installations.

2. Reasonable prices—Guaranteed Floors range from as low as 25 cents a square foot to more for the elaborate types of floors.

3. Highest grade materials—we supply materials of our own manufacture, all of which are available in the stain-proof and spot-proof Durex Process. There are many types and grades of resilient floorings from which you may choose. You may be sure of the unvarying high quality that has given Guaranteed Floors their reputation for long service.

4. Scientific installation—our Authorized Contractors maintain permanent crews of highly skilled mechanics who are able to lay these floors to last. It is because of our knowledge of the ability of these men that we are willing to assume full responsibility for their work and give a Guaranty Bond on it.

5. Guaranty bond—our specifications include a Guaranty Bond against repair expenses, tangible evidence that the floor must give you long-continued, satisfactory service.

We frankly believe that no other manufacturer and group of resilient floor contractors in this country can even approach this complete, well-rounded service. Discuss this question of Guaranteed Floors with your architect. In the meantime, please drop the enclosed card in the mail-box.

Cordially yours,

5

Dear Sir:

Will you please give us the names of the general contractors who are bidding on your new school building, telling us at the same time the type of floors you have specified. We shall greatly appreciate your courtesy in giving us this information.

If you have selected resilient floors, such as battleship linoleum or cork-composition tile, your client will benefit by having one of our Authorized Contractors submit bids to the competing general



contractors. Their record includes installations in hundreds of the nation's greatest skyscrapers and most prominent schools. They are well qualified to furnish the right floors at the right price.

We are able to furnish the very highest-grade materials as well as positively insure the proper installation of any type of resilient floor. Because of our knowledge of the work done by our Authorized Contractors, we are willing to assume full responsibility for it and give a bond on it, guaranteeing the floors against repair expense.

If you do not have samples and complete specifications of our products in your files, let us send such material to you, please. One of our representatives will gladly call on you at your convenience.

Cordially yours,

6

Dear Sir:

When you bid on the above-mentioned job, we should like to submit an estimate, through our Authorized Contractor in your territory, on the resilient flooring specified, whether it is battleship inlaid linoleum or cork-composition tile (plain or marbleized).

You may be sure his estimate will be correct in every detail and the price right. These men are experts in the resilient floor business, with a record of hundreds of successful installations of this type.

Permanent crews of trained mechanics, maintained by our Authorized Contractors, plus job supervision by our own flooring engineers, mean floors properly installed—to the entire satisfaction of you, the architect, and the owner. The installation of resilient floors is a specialty with them—not a side line. Every installation of our material made through an Authorized Contractor in accordance with our specifications is backed by our Guaranty Bond against repair expense—a unique service in the flooring industry.

There will be no delays to hold up your final payment, for the work will be done quickly and correctly the first time.

If we are not already on your list, please include us so that we may see that you receive bids from our Authorized Contractors not only on this project but on future projects in which you are interested.

Yours very truly,

7

Dear Sir:

Allow us to congratulate you on obtaining the above-mentioned contract and to wish you all success. We shall be glad to help you make this an outstanding job.

The speed with which your work progresses on this project means much to the final outcome. Resilient floors are usually the last materials to be installed and we have found through experience that they are always wanted in a hurry. We are qualified to give you just this sort of service for the following good reasons:

1. Our mills have the largest capacity in this country for the manufacture of resilient floor materials. Quantity production in our factories means prompt delivery of materials to the job.
2. Our Authorized Contractors maintain permanent crews of highly skilled workmen, men trained to work fast and well. There will be no delays--the work will be done correctly the first time.
3. Wide experience in handling all kinds of jobs enables our organization to cope promptly and efficiently with the many obstacles that must be overcome in order to complete the work to the satisfaction of all concerned.

Before you close the contract, we ask that you give our representative an interview--any time at your convenience. If he can be of any assistance to you he will be glad to do so, whether or not you decide to use Durex floors on this job.

The enclosed card requires no postage--places you under no obligation--please mail it to-day.

Cordially yours,

*The wear-out follow-up.* This continues to send out letters to potential buyers as long as the returns make it profitable, until the list of names is "worn-out." Each member of the series presents the seller's offer from a new angle or repeats the same appeal in different words. Each letter, moreover, is complete in itself in that it is designed to take every step in the selling process from winning favorable attention right through to getting immediate action. Given a list of prospects, the seller by continuous, persistent effort seeks to turn as many of these as possible into buyers of his merchandise.

The following letters constitute a series of wear-out follow-up's. Note that each letter is complete in itself, and that no unit of the series makes reference to preceding units. Moreover, there is repetition in these letters of outstanding selling points.

I

Dear Sir:

If you crank you're a crank.

For it means one of two things--either you haven't a self-starter or your car is equipped with the wrong battery.

The solution to both problems is the Universal Storage Battery--the dependable, always-on-the-job battery for starting, lighting and igniting.

And here is why.

It is built to stand hard service--strong in construction, strong in power, and strong in giving satisfaction.

But, most important of all, is its absolute freedom from ruinous sulphation--the big cause of early battery failure.

When you need a new storage battery you need a Universal, because you can forget all worries about its service. You can bet your bottom dollar that this battery will make good its definite year-and-a-half guarantee of satisfaction.

If your present battery is troubling you, drop in; let us tell you what the trouble is. As the Authorized Universal Service Station for this district, we are competent and equipped to make repairs and do recharging of all makes of storage batteries.

A good service at a just price. Use it. Bring your battery to us to-day for inspection. We may save you trouble, time, and money later on.

Universally yours,

And that's why the Universal Storage Battery is the one for you to use. It doesn't lose pep; it doesn't lie down on the slightest provocation as is the case with some batteries.

Why?

Because the one great disease of storage batteries—ruinous sulphation—is eliminated from this battery.

Pep guaranteed for one and a half years—that's what you get with this battery. This means plenty of power for a quick start and plenty of juice to keep your lights bright.

Come in to-day and let us show you why. And we can help you keep your present battery in fighting trim too—whatever its make.

Universally yours,

3

Dear Sir:

Being 100% efficient is important—

Keeping that way is very much more important.

Being everlastingly on the job is what brings results. You have to keep fit.

And what is true of you is true of your storage battery. Give it a chance to give you 100% service. Keep it at top-notch efficiency.

That's our job. We've put in a lot of work and thought on the subject of batteries, and our experience is at your service.

Don't wait for trouble—let us look over your storage battery, no matter what make, at regular intervals. Get the Universal Inspection habit—it will save you a lot of money and more trouble.

Once every two weeks in summer and once a month in winter your battery needs distilled water. Let us fill it for you and inspect it thoroughly.

Quite likely we can put off for you the day when you'll need a new battery.

When that time comes, of course you'll want a

Universal Storage Battery, with its year-and-a-half guarantee of freedom from trouble.

Universally yours,

The rest of the battery service we render is helping you pick the best battery for your car when you need a new one.

And that battery is the Universal—the storage battery that's immune from 90% of the troubles that cause batteries to die young.

Its construction guarantees you long battery life, everlasting pep, sure starts, and honest-to-goodness satisfaction.

With every Universal goes the most liberal guarantee you could ask.

Come in to-day. Let us show you this guarantee and let us give your present battery (what-ever make) a little help.

Universally yours,

*The continuous follow-up.* This enables a business firm to keep in constant touch with its prospects and customers by means of letters sent at more or less irregular intervals months after month and year after year. The purpose of these letters is usually to bring to the reader's attention at opportune times the firm's goods or service.

Because of its nature, the continuous follow-up may be used to good advantage in any honest business. A small town photographer clips from his local newspaper birth and marriage notices regularly. The names so obtained are then placed on a mailing list and followed up, sometimes for periods as long as twenty and thirty years. For example, shortly before a child reaches the age of one, its parents will receive a letter from the photographer urging them to have the youngster photographed. This follow-up is continued more or less regularly later throughout the school career of the child. Additional letters are sent before graduation time and at other eventful periods of the child's life. Newly married people are followed up for years in similar manner. A week or so preceding their wedding anniversary or other special occasions, they will receive letters suggesting their keeping a permanent record of these memorable days by means of photographs. A high-grade delicatessen store furnishes its customers and friends with information relative to seasonable and special offerings by means of this follow-up throughout the year. When mailing dividend checks, a gas and electric company calls its stockholders' attention to its service. A banker sends a personal message to every new depositor, emphasizing the service he is willing and prepared to render, and urging its recipient to use it freely. Again, at Christmas time he will write every person having an account in his bank a personal note of good-will and

appreciation. The salesman who is unable to call as often on his customers as he should like to, keeps in touch with them by means of letters. It will be seen from these few illustrations that the uses to which the continuous follow-up may be put are varied, and that the possibilities of the continuous follow-up, so far as the building up of good-will and of business in general is concerned, are well nigh unlimited.

In its endeavor to retain customer good-will and to secure more business, an auto repair shop in a large city relies largely on the continuous follow-up. Form letters neatly filled-in are sent to customers at frequent intervals throughout the year. Their particular nature becomes apparent from the following examples:

2

Dear Sir:

"You charged my wife too much for changing the tires. You would have gotten more work if you hadn't charged so much. That was a trial order."

The man who wrote us in this fashion probably wouldn't think of going to the Biltmore Hotel for a ham sandwich and expect to get the same price as he would at the sandwich counter—yet he sends his car in to us to have the tires changed by mechanics who receive \$1.50 per hour—and complains of the charge.

The Moore Service Company last month spent for labor \$8,911.88—and for materials \$8,893.81—and on top of those two items we spent \$16,778.96 for overhead charges.

That \$16,778.96 is what it cost us to give service last month. You can readily understand why we are mighty particular to render satisfactory service—so that our cost of doing business will not go higher.

As a customer of ours, we want you to know that we spare no cost to render a 100 per cent satisfactory job, and if we miss, we stand ready to make good at all times.

Our only fear is that an incident similar to the one quoted in the first paragraph might be cited as an example of our charges, which is neither fair nor justifiable.

Any time you think we are wrong, give us an opportunity to make good.

Cordially yours,

3

Dear Sir:

Have you noticed the big blackboard in our shop with its reports and tabulations of jobs done in each department and the amount of sales?

Next time you are in, take a look at it and notice that it lists also the number of complaints received by each department.

The summary for January shows the total sales were \$37,900.44; the total number of jobs was 3,676; and the complaints received during the en-

tire month were only eleven, or less than one-third of one per cent of the total jobs done.

Complaints we conscientiously try to avoid—but we are just human beings and will always make mistakes. However, complaints help us to correct errors and prevent their repetition.

So whenever you feel that the job we have done for you could have been done better or if there have been any mistakes, remember—the President of this company will consider it a special favor if you will communicate with him direct.

Cordially yours,

### PROBLEMS IN WRITING FOLLOW-UP LETTERS

1. Assume that an old-established men's hat store in your city is losing business owing to the following conditions:

1. cheap competition
2. business district shifting to other center
3. men go bareheaded
4. advertising not effective.

Prepare a series of twelve letters, one for each month of the year, basing them on the fact that the store sells good merchandise at the right price and gives courteous and prompt service. Supply such additional talking points as you may need.

The letters are to be sent to a list of 2,500 executives who work in offices located within two blocks of the store. All of these men are well-rated financially and are interested in their "P.A." Before writing the letters, submit a definite plan of your series, indicating the theme of each letter, its physical nature, the enclosures to be used, and other essential characteristics.

2. The Burke Fuel Company, Pineridge, South Carolina, specializes in selling a kindling wood called "fat pine" by the natives because of its great resinous content. The sap of this wood is extremely inflammable. This Southern product is put up in four-pound bundles, priced at ten cents.

Assume that the firm mentioned above wishes to develop a market for "fat pine" in northern states and that it has commissioned you to write a series of letters for the purpose. First of all, you are to prepare a test series to be sent to a list of financially well-rated independent grocers and coal and lumber dealers in one section of the North. State clearly how your kindling wood will enable the dealer to supply his customers with a superior product and how he can make a good profit. Offer a free sample bundle of "fat pine" to each dealer.



3. Your problem is to submit a carefully worked-out, written plan of a series of four campaign follow-up letters to be used in urging high school graduates to enter a business college. Assume that this college admits only high school and college graduates, that its faculty is composed of specialists, and that its tuition fees are 25 per cent higher than those of other local business colleges. New students are accepted only after they have had a personal interview with the registrar and after they have passed an entrance examination. Total enrollment is limited to 200 students. The school has an enviable reputation for placing graduates in promising positions.

Submit a paragraph outline of each of the four units of the series, showing the selling arguments to be employed in each letter and the key thought of each paragraph. Moreover, indicate the kind and the number of enclosures you would use with each member of the series.

Write the first and the last letter of the series.

4. Prepare a series of follow-up letters which would sell to business men a year's subscription to one of the following periodicals:

1. *Fortune*

4. *The Literary Digest*

2. *Forbes*

5. *Correct English*

3. *Time*

6. *Advertising and Selling.*

5. Your problem is to sell the service of a large, well-known city savings bank by mail. This bank pays no more interest than do other savings banks. It has done business for thirty-five years and is recognized as one of the most progressive, reliable, and modern banking institutions in the country. Supply additional selling points as you need them.

Names of prospects are obtained from inquiries which the bank receives in answer to advertisements appearing in the better national magazines.

- a. Submit a complete list of selling points which you would use in a series of wear-out follow-up letters intended to increase the number of "correspondence" depositors. Classify your selling points according to major, minor, and miscellaneous selling arguments.
- b. After thorough study of the problem, prepare the entire series of letters. They are to be multigraphed on quality letterheads with the recipients' names and addresses filled in, and to be sent by first-class mail. Make use of such enclosures as you may need.
6. Refer to problem 3 on Page 375 (Ch. XV). Your friend replied to the effect that he would have the money with which to purchase an automobile within two or three weeks. Assume that three weeks have elapsed since you heard from him. Write him again.
7. Refer to problem 8 on Page 376 (Ch. XV). Assume that the proprietor of the tailoring shop mentioned in this problem has asked you

to write a suitable follow-up letter to be sent to all those students who did not order a spring suit.

8. Refer to problem 12 on Page 376 (Ch. XV). Assume that the firm mentioned has failed to receive a reply from Maude Sterling and that it has asked you to prepare a suitable follow-up letter. Submit this letter together with a paragraph outline of the original reply to the inquiry.
9. Assume that almost a year has passed since you wrote the letter required in solution of problem 14 on Page 378 (Ch. XV). Write a suitable follow-up letter which is to arrive on the child's birthday.
10. What sort of follow-up system would you use for problem 25 on Page 433 (Ch. XVI)? Outline the series, giving the number of units you would use, the selling points you would employ in each letter, and other important data to be determined before you can begin writing the letters.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### FORM LETTERS

#### *Practicability*

Form letters are used to meet business situations which recur more or less regularly. Take the case of the firm that advertises a free catalogue to persons who will write for it. It would be unwise and expensive to send personally dictated replies to these requests, the majority of which are very much alike. The form reply, printed, multigraphed, or machine-typed, composed by someone who thoroughly understands both subject and average reader, is likely to meet the situation well. Of course, it should be adapted to the particular situation. It would be folly to send an undated mimeographed letter beginning "Dear Friend" to responsible business or professional men. Instead, an individually typed form, resembling in every particular a dictated letter, should be used.

There is probably no department in a well-organized business establishment which cannot use form letters to good advantage. Whenever the sales department sends out letters *en masse*, it uses forms. To make them appear like dictated letters, the forms are "personalized" by means of fill-ins of dates, inside addresses, and pen-and-ink signatures. Three fourths of credit and collection correspondence consists of form letters. In some businesses, individually dictated collection letters are used only rarely. The personnel and adjustment departments likewise use form letters, the one to follow up references given by prospective employees, the other to adjust routine complaints.

Necessarily the use of the form letter is limited to what may be termed a simple situation requiring a simple solution. If, for example, the request for a catalogue made in consequence of an advertisement contains specific questions in addition to the usual "Please send me a copy of your latest catalogue," then, of course, the form letter, the writer of which could hardly anticipate *all* questions likely to be asked, must yield to a dictated reply. In such cases, form letters with typewritten postscripts are sometimes serviceable.

In all cases in which the receipt of a form letter is likely to cause resentment owing to the expectation of personal treatment, an individually

dictated letter should be used. Moreover, the same form sent to the same person repeatedly is likely to rouse antagonism. Generally speaking, the use of the form letter should be confined to commonplace routine matters. That it is not the ideal form of correspondence, even in the case of collecting overdue bills—its most popular function—is brought out in the following excerpt from a magazine publisher's leaflet entitled "The Advantages and Limitations of Form Letters":

In a business like ours, dealing with upwards of two million persons in an amount which probably does not average more than \$7.00 each annually, we find form letters almost indispensable to the ends of promptness and economy. They save a vast amount of the time and expense which would otherwise be expended in the writing of personal letters. This saving we endeavor to pass on to our subscribers in the lower prices at which this practice enables us to sell our publications.

Inevitably such letters are not altogether appropriate to each and every one of the varying details of exceptional cases. Nevertheless, in the main, they cover the information needed or they present the facts adequately, assuming, as we must assume, that our records are correct and that we have accurately sensed the nature of the information required.

Naturally, any letter mistakenly implying an indebtedness which does not exist is unpleasant, no matter how courteously it may be worded; but errors will occur in every business. Instances constantly occur in which remittances are mailed to us at or about the same time that we are sending statements. They are *bound to cross in transit*; hence allowance should be made for the fact that our letter presupposes nonpayment or was in process of mailing before the payment could be posted in the regular unit routine necessarily employed in the economical conduct of a large business.

Our letters are formulated with a view to courtesy, forbearance, and good humor. Indeed, we have had many requests for copies of these letters from friends who admit they have purposely delayed answering them in order to get our entire series of letters for use in their own business.

In general, it is freely admitted that the above-named limitations and possible discrepancies occasionally are present in form letters. We urge, however, that our friends will realize the conditions which make their use almost necessary and that they will not think, when receiving such letters, that we intend to hurt their feelings or that we are in the slightest degree unappreciative of the value of their patronage and friendship.

### *Advantages*

Outstanding among the advantages of form letters is their low cost. Cheapest of all and least appealing are printed and mimeographed letters. More businesslike and less easily detected as forms are multigraphed letters. If they are "personalized" by means of typed fill-ins of dates, inside

addresses, and pen-and-ink signatures, their cost is correspondingly higher. Form letters produced on automatic typewriters are mechanically perfect and have usually all the characteristics of individually typed letters, including date, name and address, and signature. Being superior in almost every respect, such letters cost much more than multigraphed letters.

The use of these and other duplicating devices enables the business man to address one hundred or one hundred thousand customers simultaneously. Frequently, however, the only saving in the use of a form is the time and effort devoted to dictation. For example, an application for a position is received at a time when there are no vacancies. The dictator pencils on the letter, "Send form 75A," and the typist copies the model reply, having that much less dictation to take. Forms designed to meet recurring situations often contain blank spaces for names, addresses, and other important data, which the typist supplies as she copies the form. The following will illustrate:

(Date) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Dear :

In reply to your recent letter, we are sorry that you were inconvenienced by reason of the refusal of our branch manager at \_\_\_\_\_ to cash one of your personal checks.

There is no question but that you had sufficient proof of your identification and that any check which you might draw would be honored by the banks.

We have, however, found it necessary to issue rather strict rules with reference to the cashing of checks by our branch stores for several reasons. Our instructions to our store managers are that they may cash personal checks of customers for the amount of the customer's purchase only. If they cash the check for a greater sum than the actual sale price of the merchandise, or if they cash checks as an accommodation, any loss through the occasional acceptance of a bad check is deducted from the manager's salary.

Experience has shown that very few dishonest persons will cash checks in stores. This being the case, insurance companies issue a policy protecting stores against any checks taken in payment of merchandise, but they refuse to insure against checks

which are cashed for money. In cases in which such companies do insure against this type of transaction, the rate is so high as to be prohibitive.

In your letter you did not mention whether the check you attempted to have cashed was for payment of a purchase or whether it was a request to cash it for money. In the former case, our store manager should have accepted your check, as we understand that you gave him complete identification.

We thank you for writing us and we shall immediately take the matter up with our \_\_\_\_\_ manager in order to assure ourselves that he is carrying out our instructions with reference to this whole matter.

We realize the predicament one finds oneself in when one is away from home without ready cash; however, we trust that you will understand our position in this matter, and that you will realize that one of the reasons for our ability to furnish quality merchandise at such low prices is the fact that we have practically no credit or cash losses.

We greatly appreciate your patronage, Mr. \_\_\_\_\_, and trust that we may continue to be favored with your automotive business.

Yours very truly,

Thus, the use of form letters saves the correspondent the time he would otherwise spend in dictating letters. Since there are many routine situations each day which may be met satisfactorily by means of form letters, this saving is considerable over a period of time. Moreover, if much correspondence is handled by means of forms, a business can rely on typists, whose pay is usually much lower than that of stenographers.

The greatest benefit which accrues to the average firm from the use of form letters lies in their "mental" superiority over dictated messages. Usually painstaking thought goes into the writing of form letters, which is done more or less leisurely by the head of the department or by an expert correspondent. On the other hand, the quality of the dictated routine letter, so far as diction, organization of thought, and similar essentials go, is often uneven and mediocre. The correspondent, conscious of the limited amount of time he has for dictation, hurries through it in a mechanical sort of way. Usually he has neither the time nor the inclination to write thoughtfully. Of course, the discrepancy in quality between a firm's form letters and dictated letters should never be so marked as to be easily noticeable by outsiders. At any rate, it is true that the general quality of most form letters, especially their tone and diction, lends a firm's corre-

spondence a desirable uniformity, which routine correspondence dictated on the spur of the moment must necessarily lack.

A mail-order firm receiving literally hundreds of inquiries daily, answers more than 90 per cent of them by means of compact forms, some of which are shown below:

### Orders by Wire

In case of emergency, we are, of course, willing to fill an order sent by wire, making shipment C.O.D. for the amount due us, but our rule is to require cash with all orders.

We trust, therefore, that you will be in a position to have all orders accompanied by the necessary amount to cover. Please be assured of our very best attention to all your wants.

### Requests for Goods on Approval

We do not ship merchandise on approval, but our guarantee protects you against the possibility of any dissatisfaction.

You understand, of course, that if you purchase any article from us and there is anything whatever about it that you do not like, we expect you to return it for credit for the purchase price and shipping charges, or exchange for other merchandise, whichever you prefer.

Your order will receive our prompt and careful attention.

### Guns

We are required by the manufacturers of guns to sell them at the prices which they set from time to time. These prices are standard—the same as those you would pay to any dealer for these guns in any part of the country.

### Request for Wholesale Prices

We regret to inform you that we do no wholesale selling on any of our merchandise. All our prices are strictly retail.

### Reductions in Prices on Account of Quantity

Our merchandise is sold at retail prices only. No reductions are made from our regular catalog prices regardless of quantities ordered.

Quantities which may be ordered are limited in some cases, but ordinarily we can promptly fill your orders for \_\_\_\_\_ or other merchandise in any quantity you may require.

### General Price Reductions

We assure you that our customers are always given the benefit of any reductions we can make on our merchandise. These reductions are entirely dependent upon prevailing market conditions and also upon our ability to secure reductions from the manufacturers through our enormous buying power.

Please bear in mind that our merchandise is shipped to you with the distinct understanding that you are to be entirely satisfied, not only as to quality, but as to price. If you are not, then you may return the goods for a refund of the purchase price and any shipping charges you may have paid.

### Request for Agency

Much as we should like to accommodate or help you in any way possible, we are not in a position to consider the offer referred to in your letter. All of our merchandise is sold direct to our customers, and we have no agents in any part of the country nor do we contemplate employing any in the future.

### *Form Paragraphs and Their Value*

More flexible, and therefore more practical than form letters, are form paragraphs. Form letters are rather stiff and ready-made solutions of supposedly unvarying problems. Form paragraphs, being much smaller units, cover only small phases of typical situations. Thus they may be readily combined with other paragraphs, either form or dictated ones, to fashion a complete letter.

Furthermore, there may be prepared a number of form paragraphs to cover varying aspects of the same case. Take, for instance, the answering of inquiries concerning goods. Usually the queries pertain to quality, price, terms of payment, methods and time of shipment, guarantees, and so on. From old inquiries, a list of the more common questions asked may be compiled and classified by subject, and thereupon form paragraphs carefully composed for each question and filed for immediate use. To make reference speedy and correct, form paragraphs are numbered or otherwise labeled so that the dictator has only to write the symbol on a dictation slip and hand it to the typist or stenographer. Sometimes a letter may be composed entirely of form paragraphs and at other times only partly. In the latter case the dictator must make reasonably sure that the transition between the various paragraphs is smooth; otherwise the letter will be choppy. The advantages of the form paragraph are similar



to those of the form letter—lower cost, greater uniformity of tone and diction, and a higher general quality of correspondence. From time to time, the entire series of form paragraphs should be replaced by a new and more up-to-date series.

For ready accessibility, form paragraphs are usually compiled in books, each page of which bears at top or bottom the symbols of the paragraphs appearing on it. The table of contents of a book containing letters made up almost entirely of form paragraphs used by the adjustment department of a national automobile club reads in part as follows:

*Presentation of Accident Data*

- Paragraph 1-a to non-member  
1-b to member  
1-c to motor-coach, taxicab or railway company  
1-d to insurance company—non-conference  
1-e to exchange or bureau—Form 543  
1-f to insurance company—conference—Form 574  
1-g to insurance broker or automobile club  
1-h to city or county.

*Follow-Up*

- Paragraph 2-a following 1-a  
2-b following 1-a or 1-b  
2-c following 1-c, 1-d, or 1-g to broker  
2-d following 3-a, 3-b, 3-c, 3-d, 3-e, 3-f for repair bills  
2-e following 9-a  
2-f following 10-a  
2-g following 5-d  
2-h following 1-h.

In addition to "Presentation of Accident Data," and "Follow-Up," there appear headings labeled: "Status—General," "Status—Claim Against First Party," "Status—Conference," "Investigation," "Released," "Small Claims Court Procedure," and "Closing Case."

The various paragraphs under the foregoing headings are so arranged as to suggest a complete letter for each particular case. To meet possible variations, substitute paragraphs are provided. At the end of each section special paragraphs are provided. The following examples will make clear the points just made:

## LETTER 1-c

## MOTOR-COACH, TAXICAB OR RAILWAY COMPANY

Attention: \_\_\_\_\_

(1) (First Party) \_\_\_\_\_, a member of this organization, has informed us of an accident involving his (her) \_\_\_\_\_ (driven by \_\_\_\_\_) and your \_\_\_\_\_ No. \_\_\_\_\_ (bearing license number \_\_\_\_\_), in charge of \_\_\_\_\_ No. \_\_\_\_\_. (2) This accident occurred on \_\_\_\_\_, 19\_\_\_\_, about \_\_\_\_\_ M., at the intersection of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, (city).

(3) (First Party) \_\_\_\_\_'s automobile was damaged in this accident in the sum of \$\_\_\_\_\_. A copy of the repair bill is enclosed. (4)

(5) We shall appreciate your investigating this matter and informing us of your disposition of this claim.

---

(1) When first party is a pedestrian, the following should be substituted as far as note (2):

"We are representing (First Party) \_\_\_\_\_, a member of this organization, in a claim for personal injuries sustained when he (she) was struck by your \_\_\_\_\_ No. \_\_\_\_\_ (bearing license number \_\_\_\_\_), in charge of \_\_\_\_\_ No. \_\_\_\_\_."

(2) When first party's car is parked, the following should be substituted:

"This accident occurred on \_\_\_\_\_, 19\_\_\_\_, about \_\_\_\_\_ M., while (First Party) \_\_\_\_\_'s automobile was parked in front of the premises known as (address) \_\_\_\_\_, (city)."

(3) Alternatives for second paragraph.

(3-1) When repair bills are not in file, the following should be substituted:

"(First Party) \_\_\_\_\_'s automobile has not yet been repaired, but as soon as the invoice is received, a copy will be sent you."

(3-2) When paragraph (1) is used and the amount of first party's claim is not known, the following should be substituted:

"A statement of (First Party) \_\_\_\_\_'s personal injury claim will be sent you at a later date."

(4) When there are personal injuries, as well as property damage, the following should be added at the close of the paragraph:

"As a result of this accident (First Party) \_\_\_\_\_, (\_\_\_\_\_, an occupant of (First Party) \_\_\_\_\_'s automobile,) sustained personal injuries, but at the present time their extent is not known."

(5) When bills are not in file, the following paragraph should be substituted:

"We shall appreciate your investigating this matter."

The forms used for closing a case consist of three different letters:

#### LETTER 13-a

##### FIRST PARTY

In view of the fact that you have not answered our letter of \_\_\_\_\_, and as we wish to serve you in every way possible, this case will be held in abeyance for another period of \_\_\_\_\_ days. If we do not hear from you within that time, we must conclude you no longer desire the assistance of this department and our file will then be closed.

---

#### LETTER 13-b

##### FIRST PARTY

As (Second Party) \_\_\_\_\_ (Second Party's Representative) \_\_\_\_\_ has not communicated (again) with this department in regard to the accident of \_\_\_\_\_, 19\_\_\_\_\_, we believe no (further) action will be taken and we are therefore closing the file.

If you receive any (another) communication from (Second Party) \_\_\_\_\_ (Second Party's Representative) \_\_\_\_\_, please refer it to us and we shall be glad to reopen the case.

---

#### LETTER 13-c

##### FIRST PARTY

We have been informed that your claim against (Second Party) \_\_\_\_\_ has been settled.

Will you please verify this fact and inform us in what amount the case was concluded, as we hesitate to close our file until we are certain we can be of no further assistance to you.

Prepare two form letters: one to be used in acknowledgment of an order accompanied by a deposit; the other in acknowledgment of an order lacking the required deposit. Leave blank spaces in your letters for insertion of order numbers, dates of orders, dates of delivery, and other, necessary information.

3. A department store has just discontinued its policy of paying transportation charges on out-of-town customers' orders amounting to \$10 or more.

Write a form letter to be mailed to all out-of-town charge customers notifying them of this change of policy and giving reasons.

4. An oil company has decided to offer credit cards good at any one of its service stations in your state to a selected list of prospects.

Write the letter inviting the credit account.

5. It is the common practice among women's ready-to-wear stores to notify their credit customers of clearance sales five days in advance.

Write a notification card to be used for this purpose by some local store with whose merchandise and service you are familiar.

6. A local jeweler finds that many of his customers neglect to call for their repaired watches on time. His customers are men and women of the better middle-class.

Draft a form letter to be sent a week after the date on which the repairs are promised, asking that the recipient call for the repaired timepiece.

7. Once every six months a dentist notifies his patients in writing of the desirability of having their teeth examined.

Prepare the notice.

8. A food products manufacturer receives many requests from women for free copies of a booklet of recipes which he used to distribute without charge, but for the present and enlarged edition of which he charges twenty-five cents.

Prepare a form letter designed to answer such inquiries effectively.

9. Assume that you are the assistant to the personnel manager of a firm receiving daily many letters applying for positions.

Write two form letters—one to be sent to undesirable applicants declining their offers of service; the other to desirable applicants, asking each to fill out an application blank which you enclose.

10. (a) What definite suggestions have you to offer for the improvement of any of the following form paragraphs?

(b) Rewrite as many of these paragraphs as your instructor may direct.

1. We greatly appreciate the courtesy shown our representative  
Mr. in (town)

2. Your inquiry of (date) to our Buffalo office has been referred to us for attention and we have asked our Mr. to call promptly and give you complete information regarding Buffalo Fire Apparatus.
3. We would like very much to take up the matter of fire protection with the proper officials of your town.
4. We understand your town is in the market for Fire Apparatus.
5. We are much interested in your fire apparatus proposition and are writing to ask if there is anything we can do in regard to it.
6. Thanks for your (letter, post card or telegram) of the (date).
7. We are advised that you contemplate the purchase of fire apparatus, and are pleased to enclose circulars showing Buffalo apparatus which has met with great success in hundreds of towns and villages.
8. Thank you for the courtesy shown Mr. in (town). We are glad to note you expect to organize a fire company very soon.
9. Our representative, Mr. called on you recently but, unfortunately, was unable to locate you. At his request, we are enclosing circulars of
10. Circulars showing Buffalo Fire Appliance Apparatus are enclosed. These give complete specifications and description of this equipment, which is designed and built for real Fire Protection.
11. If you will please advise us, with enclosed stamped addressed envelope, we will have a representative call who can give full information and be of service to you.
12. We believe we can furnish you information which will be of interest and value to your town, if you will be kind enough to advise us, using the stamped envelope, just whom we should take this matter up with. We hope to hear from you.
13. Mr. will call on you within the next few days. However, if there is any information that you are in immediate need of, kindly let us know and we will gladly furnish it, as we are anxious to be of service to you.
14. Mr. will gladly come and give you any information or help possible. We are anxious to serve you and hope you will use the enclosed stamped envelope to let us know what we can do.
15. We appreciate your courtesy and consideration very much and are entirely at your service. Mr. will call when he can be of use to you and we will be glad to hear from you at any time.

16. We trust your town will soon be enjoying the protection afforded by one of these efficient outfits.
17. We are attaching circulars which describe the above.
18. Your interest in Fire Protection is a mark of real public spirit—this is an important matter as the ravages of fire are liable to come any moment and your only protection is reliable fire fighting equipment.

PART III  
SPECIAL CORRESPONDENCE

## CHAPTER XIX

### FOREIGN CORRESPONDENCE

#### *Present Status*

As English becomes more and more the language of world trade, the need of American exporters for transacting business in foreign tongues diminishes. There are, however, and probably always will be, many foreign business men who, owing to distance, the customs of their countries, lack of education, and many other factors, must be addressed in the respective language of their land. Since Americans generally lack the fluency with which, for instance, educated European business men are accustomed to converse and to correspond in foreign languages, they are frequently handicapped in answering export letters and have to rely on foreign help in such matters.

In dealing with foreigners, the practice among those American exporters who maintain branches or agencies abroad is to refer all correspondence to the representative in whose territory the inquirer is located. Usually all that is required in such cases is a courteous message, preferably written in the same language as that used by the foreigner, placing the firm's service facilities at his command. A copy of the letter is sent to the firm's foreign representative urging him to get in touch with the prospective customer promptly. Correspondence between export firms and their branches abroad is usually carried on in English, in most cases no special writers being employed to handle the foreign mail. Letters sent direct to foreigners are, like domestic correspondence, dictated in English and then sent to the firm's or to an independent translation bureau, the personnel of which, having not only an intimate knowledge of the foreigner's language, but also of his habits, requirements, and his country's customs, will render the message in the required tongue. Certain American firms with long-established and well-organized translation divisions entrust the handling of their foreign mail to those persons on their staffs who, having traveled extensively abroad, know the language and the characteristics of the people in the various markets which their firms serve.

Such organizations as the Philadelphia Commercial Museum, the National Association of Manufacturers in New York, as well as chambers



of commerce in the larger cities maintain translation bureaus for the benefit of their members. Some magazines devoted exclusively to foreign trade translate inquiries and other letters received by their advertisers from abroad.

### *Utility of Letters*

One of the chief differences between foreign and domestic correspondence is that the former, owing to less frequent mail service, the longer time required for transmission, and the additional delay occasioned by secondary letters designed to clear up matters of uncertainty, is as a rule far more comprehensive and exhaustive in its treatment of the subject matter than is domestic correspondence. If a firm in Philadelphia is writing on an active business matter to someone in Chicago, the correspondence may simply take the form of a series of compact, one-page messages, each dealing with a specific item and each one rather brief. However, in handling the same subject with someone in Iraq or Japan, the writer would be most likely to obtain all pertinent data available and incorporate them in a single message several pages long. In harmony with this practice is the custom of quoting in full the translations of all coded cables and radiograms which have been exchanged on a given subject.

Owing to the personal nature of letters, the difficulty of translation, and the often infrequent and irregular mail service in some foreign countries, the receipt of a letter is an important event in the routine of many a foreign business man, awaited with great expectation. Most business men abroad do not receive one-tenth the number of letters which the average American business man finds piled up on his desk several times a day. Moreover, the use of direct mail abroad, as compared with that in the United States, is insignificant. Responsible for this condition is first of all the practice by many foreign peoples of strict personal and business economy. They are by nature opposed to splurging. Furthermore, conservative business customs and policies, rigid government restrictions and control of all advertising, lack of frequent postal dispatch and delivery, high cost of printing, and other more or less local conditions limit the use of most forms of advertising abroad. Many of these limitations, however, operate to give the letter, as a business promoter, much greater attention value abroad than it commands in this country. It is easy, therefore, to understand why a letter sent to Chile or Czechoslovakia will be read leisurely, its message considered painstakingly and repeatedly.

In the export field, letters are used in conjunction with transactions

pertaining to the insertion of advertisements; the follow-up of inquiries, orders, and shipments of goods; the establishment of agencies and branches; the settlement of claims and disputes; and, of course, the promotion of sales. Some American firms, especially publishers of books, manufacturers of clothing, tobacco products, and various kinds of machinery, handle the majority of their foreign transactions by means of letters. To such firms the rapid expansion of air mail facilities in many foreign lands has been a godsend, removing the annoying delays occasioned by slow and infrequent delivery of mail abroad and obviating the necessity for using the more expensive cable- or radiogram.

### *Stationery and Mechanics*

In order to save postage, many business men use a light but firm paper for their export correspondence. Light-weight paper is especially desirable owing to the fact that foreign letters frequently run to a number of pages and are sent by air mail.

Special export letterheads marked "International Division" or "Foreign Department," bearing the user's trademarks, as stenciled on containers and crates; the names of his leading brands and patents; his telephone, telegraph, and cable addresses; and the location of foreign branches and agencies, in addition, of course, to the firm name and complete home address, are commonly used. When a rush order calls for cabling, the exporter whose letterhead carries the cable address and code is given the preference. Since to the average foreigner, business ownership and management is not merely a temporary affair of accumulating money, but often a very essential matter of family pride and prestige developed for generations, a legend on the export letterhead such as "Founded in 1892" is very meaningful.

All in all, great care should be exercised in making the printed *export* letterhead a simple, quick, and, above all, complete means of identification. Since foreign business men are as a rule more conservative and more modest in their advertising procedure than are American, extremes in the design and printing of export stationery should be avoided. For foreign correspondence it is customary in this country to use the regulation letterhead labeled "Export Division," or else to incorporate in the firm name the word "International" or "Export," as Westinghouse Electric International Company, Chrysler Export Corporation, and the like.

An examination of letterheads used by German, English, French, Dutch, Spanish, and other firms shows them to be usually top-heavy and printed in several colors. In many cases firm name, city, street, telephone,

and cable address, lists of products and branches, together with illustrations of trademarks and goods, are crowded into the upper third of an 8½" x 11" letter-heading printed on strong white paper. Judged by the American standard of dignity and simplicity of design, these letterheads would in all probability be ranked as old-fashioned, a fact which is not at all surprising when one considers the slow pace at which personal customs as well as business traditions in other countries change. Out of every ten foreign letterheads examined, two are either lithographed or embossed, the remaining eight are printed, frequently in strongly contrasting colors. Some idea of the general design and appearance of foreign letterheads may be gained from the reproductions given here.

The typographical scheme of export letters should be clean-cut and well balanced to indicate that the writer has taken time and pains to make his message as attractive as possible. A study of the mechanical set-up of letters used in other countries shows that most foreigners block the inside address but indent all paragraphs.

In arranging the inside address, German, Dutch, and Swiss firms adopt the Teutonic style by placing it, strongly indented and largely double-spaced, two or more spaces above the opening salutation, or in cases where no salutation is used, a similar number of spaces above the opening paragraph. According to this arrangement, the inside address seldom begins flush with the left margin. The following arrangements are in vogue:

**ROBERTS & C<sup>ie</sup>**

PHARMACIENS  
FABRICANTS DE  
SPECIALITES PHARMACEUTIQUES  
ET HYGIENIQUES

USINE & LA GARENNE COLOMBES

MAISON FONDÉE EN 1820  
45, RUE DE LA PAIX

[1-200]

TELEPHONE  
CENTRAL 69 06, 46 21, 29 69  
TELEGRAMMES  
PARISLOA-PARIS 81  
CHEQUES POSTAUX  
PARIS 17 487-34

5. RUE DE LA PAIX

PARIS



TELEGRAMS:  
"WHITECROSS" WARRINGTON  
TELEPHONE NOS 2, 10, 11, 12.  
AGENTS FOR A & S HIGLANDS  
BIRAM & CO. 28, EUSTON RD.  
LONDON NW1  
TELEGRAMS:  
HUNTINGLY, PIRENE, LONDON  
TELEPHONE: MUSEUM 1238  
REFERENCE: AHEV IRB.

# THE WHITECROSS COMPANY LIMITED WARRINGTON

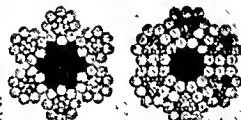
ENGLAND

ESTABLISHED 1864

CONTRACTORS TO  
THE ADMIRALTY WAR OFFICE,  
CROWN AGENTS, POST OFFICE,  
INDIA OFFICE, TRINITY HOUSE  
AND DOMINION & FOREIGN  
GOVERNMENTS  
CODES USED A1, A B C,  
72 & 87 EDITIONS, LIGARS &  
LIGERS, 5 LETTER CODE  
WESTERN UNION, HAMILTONS  
WIRE & WIRE ROPE CODE  
BENTLEY'S

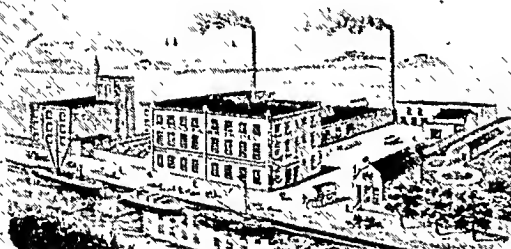


FLATTERED  
HAULING.



ORDINARY  
WINDING.

"WHITECROSS" PATENT AND PLOUGH STEEL WIRE  
ROPES FOR MINING SHIPPING & ENGINEERING WORK  
WINDING, HAULAGE, GUIDE ROPES, LOGGING ROPES



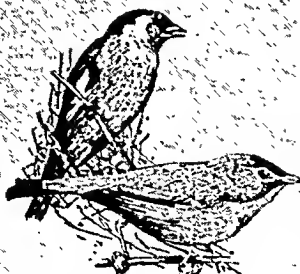
**Cacao-Fabriek**

**DELI**

OPGERICHT 1874.  
A.B.C. Code 52th Edition  
TELEGRAM ADRES: CACAOFABRIEK DELI.  
TELEFOON INT 3975

*Amsterdam.*  
Sloterstraatweg

191



## Zoologisches Versandhaus

HEINRICH HORNING  
FRÖHER E. W. LINGER

BERLIN-NEU-HEILIGENSEE 1, RUPPINER CHAUSSEE 291

FORMUL. C 8 TEGEL 122 / POSTSCHECKKONTO: BERLIN 134 82  
TELEGRAMM-ANSCHRIF: HORNING 122 BERLINTEGEL  
Expresssendungen: Station Schulzendorf bei Tegel

EIGENE EXOTEN-ZÜCHTEREI IN FREIVOLIEREN

DEN

A GROUP OF FOREIGN LETTERHEADS

Messrs. GUSTAV MEHRENHEIM & Co.,  
15 Altestrasse,  
Cologne,  
Germany.

Monsieur le Docteur S. LORAINÉ  
Petro Kapu 24  
FENER-HALIC  
Turquie.

The *heading* in foreign letters, usually consisting of the date only, is typed immediately after or immediately below the printed name of the city. When writing in English, many foreign correspondents adopt the British form of heading: 23rd May 19—.

Below the heading, or else to the extreme left of it, the reference number or subject of the letter followed by the dictator's and stenographer's initials appears: "In reply please quote: 4968 T.W./E/G." Some English firms have adopted the American practice of typing dictator's and stenographer's initials parallel with the last line of the signature and flush with the left margin.

In writing the *inside address*, most European correspondents use titles such as *esquire* and *messieurs* frequently, the former always abbreviated (Esq.), the latter abbreviated (Messrs.) or not and placed before all firm names. Special addresses to the "Attention of . . ." are not used by foreign business letter-writers, because this matter has already been taken care of in the reference numbers or letters appearing above the inside address. Thus on a letter written by a firm in Brussels, the notation CB/GH *Département Exportation*, placed four spaces above the inside address and flush with the left margin, which notation in American correspondence would be written as part of the signature, serves as identification of the writer and his department; and it is very likely to be used in the same position by the recipient of the letter for purposes of quick identification.

The most commonly used *opening salutations* in foreign correspondence (often entirely omitted from German business letters) are Dear Sir, Dear Sirs, and Gentlemen, followed by a comma and in German letters by an exclamation point, comma, or colon. The position and spacing of the salutation in foreign letters are the same as those used in American letters.

The *body* of most foreign letters, especially if they occupy only one page, is double spaced, the various paragraphs being indented. If a foreign letter touches on a variety of topics, sometimes paragraph headings in capi-

tal letters placed flush with the left margin are used, a custom in vogue among British correspondents. As a rule, however, there is a tendency among foreign correspondents to crowd the entire message, regardless of the number of topics it touches on, into the fewest number of paragraphs possible; and one-page letters written in single paragraphs are the rule rather than the exception.

The most widely used *closing salutation* in foreign letters written in English is "Yours faithfully," followed by a comma and usually preceded by "We beg to remain" or a similar phrase, also followed by a comma. Letters written in German close with "Hochachtungsvoll" (Respectfully yours) or with "Mit vorzüglicher Hochachtung" (Most respectfully) not punctuated in any way. In French business letters the closing salutation as such is incorporated in the last paragraph of the letter, which consists almost entirely of complimentary phrases, as for instance: "Nous vous présentons, Monsieur, nos bien sincères et empressées salutations." A similar practice is followed in Spanish and Italian correspondence.

It should be clear from the foregoing that the closing salutation of letters addressed to foreign business men should be the equivalent of the old-fashioned and now trite American phrase: "We beg to remain, gentlemen, Yours respectfully," rather than of the somewhat abrupt "Yours truly," used at the present time. Even though the closing salutation is at best a more or less meaningless appendix, one should keep in mind the fact that foreigners as a class are much more likely to be offended by the use of incorrect forms than are Americans. Thus, the use of a curt or very inappropriate closing phrase might easily be taken as a personal affront by a business man abroad and prompt him to terminate all business relations.

The *signature* occupies the same position in foreign letters which it does in domestic letters, except that frequently no space is left between it and the complimentary close. Instead of typing the signature, the custom in many foreign offices is to use a rubber-stamp, giving firm name and writer's name with title or departmental designation. In order to make the signature more noticeable, it is usually stamped in an ink of different color from that of the type of the letter. A pen-and-ink or penciled signature, very often wholly illegible, is written below or through the rubber-stamped firm name. The following examples will indicate various practices:

HUGH D. SEATON &amp; CO., LTD.,

---

Managing Director.N. V. FRANK RADEMAKER'S  
Cacao & Chocoladefabriek

---

LE DIRECTEUR

In the case of English and German correspondence, the rubber-stamped signature is quite often replaced by a pen-written or penciled signature, giving only the name of the firm.

Enclosures are indicated by suitable legends usually written several spaces below the signature and flush with the left margin:

Invoice (copy) enclosed  
Separate: 3 printed matters.

3 listini prezzi

1 annexe (typed)

N. 18. ← (red and black sticker)

Some British firms place stickers in red or blue, marked "Enclosure," in a conspicuous place on the first page of the letter.

The word "Copied" is written or stamped in the left margin of the letter to indicate that a copy will follow. This copy is sent on a ship following the original letter, especially so when the message contains very important data or documents which the sender wishes to reach their destination without fail. Letters addressed to countries in which the postal service is not quite reliable are often written in duplicate, the copy being forwarded approximately a week after the original.

In concluding this section on the typographical set-up of foreign letters, it is well to call attention to the fact that there are still business men in other lands, especially retailers and agents, who write all their letters with pen and ink, but who nevertheless constitute worth while connections for the American exporter. Because a foreigner pens his letters, it would be unwise to jump at the conclusion that his business and his credit standing are limited and therefore undesirable. Since the saving of time is not an obsession with most foreigners, they frequently prefer to write their letters by hand, especially if these concern important or confidential matters.

### *Reader Adjustment*

Unless a correspondent has detailed and accurate knowledge of his prospective customer's country, the people's habits, customs, and language, he should not attempt to write him direct. A lack of such knowledge necessitates the employment of translators, either Americans who have lived abroad or else natives of the countries with which business relations are to be maintained. No amount of second-hand information concerning foreign buyers and foreign territory can supplant the close-up view which personal dealings with a people in their own country afford. Thus the average business man in America has no conception of the leisurely and often primitive conditions under which business is carried on in many European and South American countries. And if he were to apply the hurry-up tactics and high-pressure methods in vogue in America to dealing with people of other lands, he would make of them not friends but enemies.

A friendly atmosphere created by means of courteous opening and closing paragraphs, such as are considered more or less out of date in American business writing, should pervade export letters. The following letter, written by an English firm, suggests such an atmosphere:



Quality. We note your buyer's comments, and we must at once affirm that our Oil is absolutely genuine in every respect, as it is manufactured from Pure Linseed Oil of the highest quality. It is carefully boiled and will give every satisfaction.

We are certain that the trouble your buyer has mentioned is due to some other cause. You may always rely that our Oil is of the first quality and absolutely genuine and you can always guarantee this to the buyers.

Market. The firmness of the market on our side is due to short covering. Regarding lower prices, a great deal depends on what happens in America.

If the English market and the Dutch market have American buyers closed against them, it seems certain that lower prices here will be the rule, unless the domestic demand in Europe is considerably increased.

There are also other factors to take into consideration. For instance, the question of Argentine Seed. The information regarding this commodity is conflicting. It seems impossible to obtain anything reliable and previous experience has made operators sceptical about the figures. If it is true that the Argentine is short of Seed, this will certainly send prices up, but it is quite feasible that South America may suddenly find a nestegg of some thousands of tons of Linseed to present to Europe unexpectedly.

The September/December position has been quoted in this country at a big discount on Spot and as the speculators were of the opinion that the crushers would not be able to buy seed to make oil at a profit, they interested themselves in Oil for the last four. A lot of the Trade Houses have also covered part of their requirements for this position.

Always esteeming your orders,

We remain,

Yours faithfully,

Owing to great distances, infrequency of boat sailings, and numerous other conditions beyond the control of the export correspondent, promptness, especially in replying to inquiries and requests for prices and terms, is imperative. Moreover, many a foreigner in opening business relations with American exporters, addresses his inquiries to several firms recom-

mended to him, finally placing his orders with the one that, other things being equal, gives him prompt service and courteous attention. Almost invariably he associates lack of promptness in correspondence with lack of interest—and rightly so.

To speed up foreign trade communications, more and more exporters rely on air mail, the additional cost of which is frequently justified by the time saved—in many cases a considerable item. Thus, ordinarily three weeks are required for the delivery of a letter despatched from Los Angeles, California, to Santiago, Chile, whereas, if air mail is used, only ten days elapse.

It is facts, detailed facts concerning goods, minus the usual ballyhoo found in many domestic letters, which the importer abroad appreciates. Owing to his unfamiliarity with the exporter's wares and services, all statements relating to merchandise, service, prices, terms, and discounts should be so specific and so complete that the importer will be able to form not only definite but conclusive opinions as to whether the business relationship is likely to prove profitable for him or not. This applies especially to inquiries from abroad, which should be answered fully, certainly not by means of stereotyped form letters and poorly adapted printed matter. In this connection a successful exporter comments: "We must realize that many foreigners do not know very much about conditions in the United States. Every business man here knows certain things as matters of course. In writing American firms there are many details which we do not have to touch upon because they are common knowledge. But it is different with the foreigner—we must tell him everything. He may never have been to America. He may be having a very hazy picture of our railroad facilities, our mode of handling freight, especially from factory to sea-board. In fact, the foreigner himself may be living in an inland place where goods must be hauled to him by horse-drawn vehicle, on mule back, or by motor truck. How, then, can he calculate what the cost of his goods will be on arrival? While the exporter cannot tell him the cost of hauling from the correspondent's own seaport to his inland home, he can tell him just what the shipment will cost delivered on board ship. And this information should include not only freight, but cartage charges, insurance, and other essential items."

An inquirer abroad is very likely to judge the exporter's ability and willingness to serve him entirely by the sort of reply which he receives from the latter. Unless that reply is courteous, concrete, and, above all, complete, it will be disregarded. The following paragraphs taken from a routine export letter before it was translated contain neither unnecessary information nor clever "appeal":

It is a pleasure to inform you that we have recently adopted a restricted line of small tools of a cheaper quality and intended solely for use by hand.

These tools are made of good-quality straight carbon steel, and they are manufactured to correct limits. If any of these tools should find sales among the smaller mechanics of your vicinity, we would be glad to fill your orders for them promptly.

By another post we are sending you to-day a copy of our catalog #43-E, together with a discount sheet applying to these catalog prices.

We shall appreciate hearing from you concerning this matter at your early convenience and remain.

No matter what faults a letter to a foreigner may have, he is likely to overlook a good many of them if its tone is eminently tactful. The average foreign business man has more time for gracious expressions of sentiment and the many little courtesies which are known to smooth personal and business intercourse. He is accustomed to being treated as an individual, a person of some importance and prestige, not merely as an average customer. In other words, the export correspondent cannot handle the firm's customers all alike as he does so frequently when writing to the domestic trade. To establish friendly business relationships, foreign letters must have a pronounced *personal* tone. Most foreigners are extremely courteous, as is shown in part by their continued use of such expressions as "We beg to convey to you, Gentlemen, assurances of our highest appreciation and look forward with great pleasure to the receipt of further orders from you." In letters to foreigners it is much safer to err on the side of friendliness than aloofness, of sympathetic personal understanding of the other's point of view than careless disregard of it. The standard of the average American business correspondent summed up in the dictum "Make it snappy!" is not applicable to foreign letters, in which "snappiness" would be taken for inconsiderateness, if not outright unfriendliness.

The following sentences taken at random from foreign letters written in English indicate the tone and language used by foreigners themselves in their business letters:

A firm in Leipzig, Germany, writes:

We thank you very courteously for your inquiry of 5.1.19—.

change; in fact, owing to advancing costs of production, some of them have already been changed. In general, shoes now cost from 50% to 75% more than they did at the time the catalog was issued. We shall be glad to cable you our current prices on any style of shoe in which you may be interested, one week after we receive your inquiry. To such prices you would have to add insurance, freight, etc. from New York. We allow a discount of 3% for cash against shipping documents.

We trust your interest has been sufficiently aroused to warrant you in placing a trial order with us, and we assure you, Gentlemen, that you will be accorded prompt service and full co-operation in all transactions.

Very sincerely yours,

### *Languages Used*

It is customary to address foreign correspondents in the language of their own letters. To-day many American exporters receive an increasing amount of foreign mail written in English, the percentage ranging from sixty to ninety. In the remaining 10 to 40 per cent, French and Spanish seem to be the languages most often used. If an American firm receives a letter from abroad couched in bookish or so-called dictionary English, showing that its writer has difficulty with English, it will, as a matter of courtesy, reply in the language of his country.

It cannot be emphasized too strongly that the simpler and clearer the English used in letters to foreigners, the greater becomes the opportunity to have them understood correctly and acted upon. Freedom from colloquialisms, slang, technical and "trick" phrases, as well as from modes of emphasis which many times make a letter to the domestic trade "pull," is essential.

Few American exporters write letters directly in foreign languages. Ordinarily the letters are first dictated in English and then rendered into the foreign tongue. A prominent exporter places the translation of the English wording on a special sheet headed: "Traduction—Übersetzung—Tradducion—Translation," which carries this statement in the same languages: "The following is an interpretation of a letter written in English, to which it is attached as an aid to you and as a safeguard against misunderstandings. Please regard the English copy as the official communication."

The Spanish, English, German, and French languages are the ones commonly used in export correspondence, Portuguese being used not only for Portugal and her possessions, but also for Brazil. English is not only

Most exporters keep prospect and customer follow-up cards (filed geographically) which, in addition to credit and other essential data, give the original source of the name. These cards are usually referred to before foreign letters are answered. Exporters maintaining branches or agencies abroad usually credit inquiries and sales to them, thus keying their correspondence and follow-up records accordingly. The keying of various export transactions, involving as it does special office detail, is in some cases expensive. It should, therefore, be used only when it is likely to facilitate trading abroad by yielding useful information.

### *Sales Letters from Abroad*

To give the reader a somewhat more comprehensive idea of the form and content of letters that have the sales element and were written abroad, the following, which are not translations, are submitted:

#### A

(Letter from a firm in Lausanne, Switzerland)

Dear Sirs,

Through the courtesy of your Chamber of Commerce we understand that you are interested in the import of fancy food products, and we therefore offer you the exclusive sale of our

"GRUYEMMA" Genuine Swiss Cheese.

This cheese is prepared from the finest Alpine full cream cheese and will keep in any climate, even tropical, without the slightest alteration for several months after arrival at destination.

#### CASE SPECIFICATIONS.

Each case contains 12 lever-top tins, each containing 6 x 8 oz. net cartons in 6 portions.

#### PRICE.

If our offer interests you, just cable us the word ACCEPT, and we shall immediately cable you our price per case delivered c.i.f. Los Angeles.

#### SHIPMENTS.

Shipments to Los Angeles are effected via Panama Canal.

#### DISCOUNT.

To our distributors we allow 5% and 2% discount.

TERMS OF SALE.

Cash against documents in your country.

AGENCY CONDITIONS.

We require that our agents buy for their own account, and we never accept agents on a commission basis.

We shall be much obliged to hear from you either per return or by cable. Thanking you in anticipation of a favourable reply, we beg to remain,

Yours faithfully,

B

of all kinds of merchandise, especially beans such as: MEXICAN RED, PINKS and RED KIDNEYS.

We are in daily touch with all the foodstuffs importers established in Havana, to whom we sell important quantities of merchandise from all parts of the world, and we are sure we would make of your agency a success.

Prices should be based c.i.f. Havana, including our brokerage commission.

For references about our firm, we beg to offer these names:

THE NATIONAL CITY BANK OF NEW YORK,  
Lonja Branch, Havana, Cuba.

Gibbs Preserving Co., Baltimore, Md.  
Texas Rice Company, El Paso, Texas.  
Messrs. Wm. Ferch & Co., Baltimore, Md.

Hoping to hear from you, we remain,

Sincerely yours,

## PROBLEMS IN FOREIGN CORRESPONDENCE

1. In a letter addressed to your instructor, or else a brief report, present the various respects in which the letter given below, which was written by a British firm, differs in matters of form, language, and appeal from a similar American business letter.

OUR REF:-FEB/MO.

Jean D. Pallas, Esq.,  
Boîte Postale No. 456,  
GALATA. Istanbul.

MARCH  
-30th  
-19—

Dear Sir,

We thank you for your letter of the 19th inst. and your Postcards of the 20th, and 25th insts., contents of which have our careful examination.

We are obliged for your remittance of £15.0.0., receipt for which has already been posted to you.

We have accordingly put in hand your order as follows:—

- 1 No. 45. Typewriter with Turkish-French-16 Keybd, Pica Type, Corres. Figs. Metal Cover and Baseboard.
- 1 Stand. Type Unit with Turkish-Greek 18 Keybd, Pica Type, Corres. Figs.

- 3 Model B. Type Units with Turkish-Greek 20 Keybds, Pica Type, Corres. Figs.

TYPE UNITS TO BE FITTED WITH TIN BOXES

- 6 Purple Copy Ribbons  
2 Boxes of Tools  
5 Feed Roller Rubbers.

As you will observe from the above, we are supplying the Type Units with Tin Boxes.

We note your explanation of "real Turkish characters" and that what you require are what we term Arabic characters, and in compliance with your request we enclose herewith Blue Print showing our standard Arabic keyboard which will no doubt answer your requirements.



The continuing rise in prosperity, the increasing tourist trade and the soundness of the economic and political background are main factors for you to establish or increase your export to Cuba.

In conclusion, here in Cuba is a market, which for the average advertiser offers more sales possibility than many of the states in the United States. Here is a newspaper combination, The Havana Post and The Havana Evening Telegram, which should be the backbone of every newspaper list made up by any national advertiser interested in Cuban business.

We shall be glad to supply you with any information you desire on this promising market of four million consumers, which lies at the door-step of the United States.

Yours very truly,

3. Rewrite the following letter, addressed in English to an American manufacturer by a firm in Portugal:

Dear Sirs,

I have been given your valuable address by the Omaha Chamber of Commerce as importer of Portuguese sardines in pure olive oil; so I take the liberty of writing you the present letter with a view to business.

As you are large importers, you will certainly be interested in buying direct instead of making your purchases locally or through Agents.

I have been since very long a packer and large exporter of Sardines in olive oil to your country and no doubt I am in a position to supply your requirements.

I can also pack you special brands if you have any.

Please note that I am also exporter of Anchovies, canned tomatoes and olives.

My references are as follows:

Fonsecas, Marcos & Vianna, Lisbon

Banco do Minho

New York Trust Co.

New York.

Awaiting your reply with great interest, I am, dear Sirs,

Yours faithfully,

4. Assume that you are the assistant to the export manager of the Superior Typewriter Company, your city, and that you have just been asked to draft a circular letter intended for customers in Germany and Holland. It is to notify them of the fact that your firm is now prepared to make immediate shipment of the new Noiseless Superior Typewriter equipped with special type for use by Europeans and announced to the European trade two months ago.

Enclose an illustrated folder with your letter and supply all data necessary to make your message complete and convincing. Since your firm's customers in Germany and Holland correspond in English, your letter is not to be translated.

5. The Marshall Manufacturing Company, San Francisco, California, canners and distributors of sardines, have just received the following soliciting letter from Hans Im Obersteg & Co., Aeschengraben 4, Basel, Switzerland, forwarding and shipping agents:

Dear Sirs,

We beg to bring to your notice the fact that we maintain in conjunction with the Marston Line, a very quick and efficient Service between Switzerland and San Francisco.

The steamers we employ are installed with Refrigerators with a capacity of approximately 10,000 cubic feet, which accommodations enable us to accept for transport such perishable goods as CHEESE etc. Regular sailings are arranged to take place towards the end of each month, and the time taken in transit is very short.

We attach hereto our lowest quotation for this business and look forward with interest to your news that you have decided to place some traffic our way.

Assuring you of our best services always, we beg to remain,

Yours faithfully,

Answer this letter. Ask for complete information concerning rates, insurance, etc.

## CHAPTER XX

### HOUSE CORRESPONDENCE

#### *Nature and Organization*

House correspondence, also called internal, inter-office, inter-departmental, or inter-branch correspondence, includes all written communications pertaining to a firm's business passing between employees and officials of that firm. Only large businesses have well-organized systems of internal correspondence, and even they make every possible attempt to reduce the volume of such correspondence to a minimum by using, whenever practicable, the telephone, the conference, and even the loud speaker for inter-office communication. Still, there are always messages which cannot be transmitted orally because they are confidential or personal, or else because a record in black and white must be kept for future reference and action. Inter-branch correspondence is, of course, largely carried on by letter, that being, especially with the present air mail facilities, the quickest and most economical means of communication.

An examination of systems of house correspondence reveals two definite trends: in some organizations the practice is, as has been intimated already, to rely as much as possible on verbal (telephone, etc.) instructions. Every effort is made to save stenographic effort and writing materials by dictating memoranda and letters only when absolutely needful. It follows that when an employee does find it necessary to send a note or a letter, it pertains to a significant matter, the gist of which he will take pains to present clearly and compactly so as to minimize possible misunderstandings. And when his fellow employee, who may be the chief clerk or the president's assistant, receives the communication, he will likewise know that, being written, it is important and that therefore it deserves his immediate and undivided attention.

Oftentimes the volume of internal correspondence can be appreciably reduced by making certain that all employees are informed on the various phases of their particular jobs, especially as they affect directly or indirectly the work of other offices, departments, or branches. Such reduction was made possible in the office of a manufacturer whose general office

manager provided every department head with one or more copies of a manual—the employees called it the “company bible”—which specifically stated the functions of each department, its relations to other departments and the firm as a whole, and the *specific* duties of every employee in that department from those of the filing clerk to those of the manager. No employee in that large organization—its office force alone numbered over two hundred—could plead ignorance of what he was to do or how and why it was to be done, especially since the manual was kept scrupulously up-to-date.

The other tendency in present-day house correspondence is characterized by the dictum: “Avoid verbal instructions—put them in writing!” In extreme cases this policy results in the dictation of memoranda and letters on wholly unimportant matters, which soon fill filing cases to overflowing. Office clerks and others in subordinate positions, not using discretion, follow the dictum blindly, wasting much time and effort in writing and answering poorly worded notes, often accompanied by carbon copies for persons not affected by the matter at all. Such wasteful practice shows lack of analyzing and planning daily routine. It is usually, though not always, indulged in during periods of prosperity, when office and other help is plentiful.

### *Typographical Arrangement*

House correspondence differs from ordinary business correspondence in its appearance and its content. It is to be expected that fine quality stationery, impressive letter-headings, formal opening and closing paragraphs, and similar expedients ordinarily required to impress a customer, should be omitted from house correspondence. Its tendency is toward simplicity and brevity.

The stationery used for internal correspondence is often cheap, white or yellow (second sheets) paper. For writing letters, the standard,  $8\frac{1}{2}$ "  $\times$  11", size is used; for writing memoranda, the half sheet,  $8\frac{1}{2}$ "  $\times$   $5\frac{1}{2}$ ", is preferred. Envelopes are used only for confidential or highly important messages—all others are merely folded and then clipped together to save time and stationery. For inter-office correspondence some firms use inexpensive manila envelopes, and for inter-branch correspondence, their regular business envelopes.

For inter-office correspondence some firms use blank paper; others paper with a printed heading, as, for example, the following:

## MARVIN MILK PRODUCTS COMPANY

## House Correspondence

Date: File No.:  
From: Subject:  
To Branch  
or Dept.:  
Attention of:

or merely:

## MASSACHUSETTS MINING CORPORATION

## Inter-Office Correspondence

Frequently office memo pads are punched to permit quick filing of really important memoranda.

The typographical arrangement of inter-office letters includes the following parts:

1. the heading, consisting of file number, subject and date:

File: 67-77

Subject: Sales Manual

Date: August 1, 19—.

Its position and punctuation are the same as those of the heading in ordinary business letters, except, of course, where forms require the various parts of the heading to be filled into allotted spaces. For a discussion of the heading as well as other parts of the ordinary business letter, turn to the chapter entitled "The Dress of the Business Letter."

2. the inside address, usually consisting of the name of the department and the addressee, or the name of the department or branch only, or the name and title of the addressee together with the name and place of the branch:

Sales Department—John F. Klair

San Pablo Branch Office

Mr. Francis Bell, District Manager,

El Paso, Texas.

*Information for the Sender*, consisting of the dictator's and the stenographer's initials, is often omitted from inter-office memoranda. However, this information, frequently with references to enclosures and extra carbon copies, appears usually on all inter-branch letters, where it is placed in the lower left corner, flush with the margin, starting on the same line as the last line of the signature:

AEG/K

Encls.2

cc- R. Taylor, Sales Dept.

- W. Taylor, Personnel Dept.

### *Characteristics of Message*

Brevity and directness characterize the English used in house correspondence. Many of the usual formalities and courtesies marking correspondence with customers are omitted. The message is boiled down to the fewest possible words, the bare essentials. Since both sender and recipient work for the same employer, whose interests presumably they have at heart, the usual methods of attracting favorable attention by means of pleasing first paragraphs are dispensed with entirely. The tone of such communications is businesslike, and since they are frequently, though not always, written in the third person, it is impersonal. In all other respects, the English used in house letters should be clear, correct, and compact—precisely like that used in ordinary correspondence, and fully explained in the chapter devoted to “The English of the Business Letter.”

## ILLUSTRATIONS OF HOUSE CORRESPONDENCE

### A

#### A Letter of Information

(Often referred to as “Exploitation Letter” by motion picture producers)

Exploitation letter. Executive Offices of World-Wide Studios, Hollywood, California.

To: ALL DISTRICT MANAGERS, BRANCH MANAGERS AND SALESMEN:

Subject: AMOS 'N ANDY

No doubt you will be glad to know that the first AMOS 'N ANDY subject will be released January 5, and the second subject will follow in time for release early in February. Additional release dates will be announced later.

Owing to circumstances beyond our control, the release of this series of cartoons has been

held up. Each branch has on its records, intact, the original AMOS 'N ANDY deals, and in the few situations in which cancellations may have been accepted, it should be an easy matter to reinstate the original deals as, judging from your letters, there has been a definite demand among the exhibitors for these subjects.

Immediately upon receipt of this letter, I want you to instruct your salesmen to push the selling of this series, and, at the earliest opportunity, they must cover the possibilities that have been sold since October in an effort to get them to play these pictures.

The popularity of AMOS 'N ANDY on the air is as big as ever, and the eagerness with which the public will greet this series cannot but make it the biggest seller on our short subject program. You must now work fast in order to make up for lost time.

State your total sales and the number of deals taken on this series in your next Weekly Accumulative Branch Sales Report and in the Personal Sales Reports as well. I shall watch these figures carefully to see how fast they increase.

Please acknowledge.

Very truly yours,

B

A Letter of Instruction

MARVIN MILK PRODUCTS COMPANY

House Correspondence

Date:	January 1, 19—.	File Number: 750-B
From:	Credit Office	Subject: Retail Credit Sales Instructions
To:	All Route Salesmen	

Please read carefully and keep for future reference.

Whenever a customer requests the privilege of opening an account, or in anticipation of his doing so, the Salesman will secure a Credit Application Card, Form C-900-A, which he will refer to his Foreman after he has recommended the customer for credit. A salesman should not, however, recommend any customer for credit unless he has strong reason to believe that the customer is entitled to such accommodations.

C

Mr. Blaine, Allen, Galt, Misler:

Date: June 24.....

Record Card (Active) (Inactive)

Application (Active) (Inactive)

Correspondence (Last Year)

Salary Adj. to \_\_\_\_\_ Effective \_\_\_\_\_

Confirm Adj. to \_\_\_\_\_

Call in hour \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Trans. to Sec. \_\_\_\_\_ Effective \_\_\_\_\_

Form Letter to \_\_\_\_\_

Voucher Number \_\_\_\_\_

See me to-day \_\_\_\_\_

Sales Record \_\_\_\_\_

Error Record \_\_\_\_\_

References \_\_\_\_\_ ✓ \_\_\_\_\_

Complete \_\_\_\_\_

Follow Up \_\_\_\_\_

Remarks \_\_\_\_\_

Subject: John Wooden

2304

.....  
Address

Phone

Emp. No.

Mr. Blaine, Allen, Galt, Misler.



5. As manager of the educational department of the Best-Buy Dept. Store, your city, write a letter to the heads of all departments notifying them of a lecture to be given in the firm's auditorium, giving speaker's name, subject, time of lecture, etc.
6. Write the head timekeeper of the Moore Electric Corporation to send you, the firm's office manager, a complete list of salaries paid to the clerks employed in the comptroller's office at the present time.
7. Write the office manager of the Bark Finance Corporation, 89 Saule Street, Fayetteville, Arkansas, to send you, the district manager at Minneapolis, Minnesota, fifteen copies of your firm's annual report.
8. As credit manager of the Franklin Wholesale Grocers, your city, write Chester Place, manager of the firm's branch at San Antonio, Texas, asking him to ship all orders to the Bersten Grocers, Allura, Texas, C.O.D. until further notice.
9. Write a note to the advertising manager of the Wells Department Store, your city, asking him to send you, the firm's merchandising manager, extra proofs of all full-page advertisements run during the past month.
10. As secretary to the general superintendent of the Wells Department Store, your city, write a general note to the heads of all departments, notifying them of a special meeting. Give all necessary details.

It should be added, however, that the practice of correspondence supervision is always likely to be limited to really progressive firms striving in their many letters for a distinctive expression of so-called house policies and house character.

### *Purpose*

Ordinarily, the chief aim of correspondence supervision is to produce an improved letter at lower cost. To attain it, standards are set up for dictators, stenographers, and typists pertaining to letter form and to letter diction. Those concerned with form, often found in style sheets, regulate all such details of typographical set-up as the use of the block or the indention system, of open or closed punctuation, of abbreviations, titles, and signatures, of spacing within and without paragraphs, and perhaps of suitable opening and closing salutations. These and many other matters are usually standardized with a view to giving all of a firm's outgoing letters a uniform appearance by which they may be favorably recognized. Accordingly, models showing standard forms are placed within reach of stenographers and typists with instructions not to deviate from them. This simple device of dressing all of a firm's letters alike expedites their being typed quickly and uniformly. It saves the time of those dictators and stenographers who might otherwise be tempted to experiment with the typographical set-up of the letter according to their whims. Even those firms which do not employ directors of correspondence recognize the value of giving their letters a uniform appearance and issue instructions accordingly.

The true function of correspondence supervision, however, is the improvement of the message which constitutes the letter. Its performance is no mediocre attainment, for it requires the ability not only to write good English from a particular firm's viewpoint, but the ability to develop writing skill in others, who frequently have little aptitude. "My task," said one correspondence supervisor, "is to help lift the tone, the character, the general effectiveness of my firm's letters so that they may project pleasantly the individuality of our organization and leave no doubt that it has high ideals, that its leading aim is to serve its customers with a product of provable merit."

The greatest improvement which *any* firm's supervisor of correspondence can work pertains to the proper use of the simple fundamentals of rhetoric, supposedly taught and learned in grammar school—correct spelling and punctuation, the right use of simple words such as "affect" and "effect," and the construction of sentences and paragraphs which convey

definite meaning unmistakably. And since most dictators use the same words and phrases over and over again with deadening effect, the supervisor must constantly impress them with the practical value of phrases well turned and original.

Once the supervisor has succeeded in eradicating the most glaring faults in English grammar and usage from the dictation of correspondents, he can turn to the task of helping them to produce letters which show distinctly house character. Every business firm has formulated certain policies of dealing with its trade and adheres to practices conducive to attracting and maintaining good-will. Its letters are to carry a statement of these policies and practices to customers and the general public with a view to enhancing the firm's standing, but carefully woven into each letter's paragraphs must be the service and the sales elements.

Yet in the teaching of business writing, the supervisor must leave the individual dictator free to use his own style, since otherwise the firm's correspondence would suffer from lack of initiative and individuality. His task, in other words, is to get his men not to imitate, but to initiate.

While a lowering of the cost of the letter is not a primary aim of supervision, its attainment usually results if the work has been carried on systematically and efficiently. Quite often a reorganization and simplification of the methods of dictation, such as a change from stenographer to dictaphone, the setting aside of certain periods for uninterrupted dictation, and the employment of expert dictators and stenographers, have produced not only better but also much cheaper letters. The simple expedient of using the same kind of letter form, stationery, typewriter, and other materials enabled a certain firm to reduce the cost of its correspondence considerably. Sometimes the establishment of a centralized correspondence department in which all of a firm's routine letters are dictated and typed by well-trained personnel under more or less ideal conditions reduces the cost of letter-writing substantially. It should be added, however, that whenever the sole motive of correspondence supervision is to turn out a cheap letter, as for instance, through the use of an elaborate system of form letters, the general quality of the correspondence is likely to be lowered.

### *Practice*

The methods of supervising correspondence vary with the qualifications of the supervisor, the nature, policies, standards, and ideals of the firm, the type and training of the personnel, the volume of mail, and many other factors. Since each firm's letter problem is distinct and must

needs be solved on its own merits with an eye to the peculiar conditions which have produced it, only general suggestions as to the best practices of supervision can be given here. Before discussing these practices in detail, let us consider the type of person likely to succeed in their formulation and their ultimate realization.

### *The Supervisor's Qualifications*

The person who sets out to show certain members of a firm how to improve their writing should have a background of training and experience that is as broad as it is thorough. First, and perhaps most essential of all, he should himself be a successful dictator. He should know what imagination, energy, and concentration and what knowledge of English are required to write a letter, report, or article so that it will be thoroughly understandable and acceptable to the reader. His ability to write should be closely allied with his desire to read widely and wisely. If he is a college-trained man, so much the better. Those of the firm's personnel having a similar education will be more apt to follow his instructions and to respect his suggestions.

Moreover, an efficient correspondence supervisor must know salesmanship—not merely from books but from actual field experience. One of his most trying tasks will be to convince the firm's dictators that their letters need changing and that he is the one person to show them how. Tact and patience, imagination and aggressiveness, the ability to talk agreeably and convincingly—all attributes of the successful salesman—are essential if he would succeed as a supervisor.

In addition to being a good writer and a good salesman, a correspondence supervisor should be a good business man. Unless he has faith in present-day business methods, not a blind but a knowing faith, founded on first-hand familiarity with these methods, unless he likes business and its men, he should not presume to advise in matters of business writing.

Usually, successful correspondence supervisors are recruited from business itself or from schools. Sometimes a minor executive with both writing and teaching ability is assigned to the task of improving the quality of the firm's letters. Since he knows its policies, its letters, and the men who dictate them, he has an advantage over the correspondence supervisor brought in from the outside, who first must familiarize himself with all these matters. An outsider, on the other hand, is not handicapped by the prejudices which the other is likely to have. He begins with a clean slate and is likely to have a broader point of view of the whole future of business writing than the "inside" man. If he is really interested in his job,

he will soon familiarize himself with the history of the company, its standing in the world of business, its product and service, and its principles or lack of principles. A case in point was the employment by a banking system of a teacher of English but a few years out of college, whose theoretical knowledge of business coupled with his teaching experience enabled him to set up standards which resulted in the improvement of the bank's letters.

### *Presenting the Program*

Before a supervisor can put his program or system into effective operation, he must arouse interest in it. For this purpose he will first of all seek the active coöperation of executives, correspondents, stenographers, and others able to help him with the installation of his system. Through personal interviews he will endeavor to sound out the heads of departments on his plans, offering his services not as a superior ready to impose his own ideas arbitrarily, but rather as a co-worker vitally interested in their dictation problems. He can say something like this: "Mr. Bennett, since you are thoroughly familiar with the correspondence situation in your department, I have come to you for suggestions. You know the needs of your department with reference to effective letters best, and I want, if possible, to aid you in meeting these needs more readily without, of course, disturbing your office routine. If you will outline your particular problems to me, I will do my level best to help you solve them. With your coöperation, we may get results which will benefit us both." In response, the supervisor may be shown the department's letter files, the functions of its particular letters are likely to be explained to him, and certain good letters emphasized. If he succeeds in gaining the confidence of a majority of those interviewed, he is ready for the next step in his program, which includes talks on how to write better letters, bulletins, the answering of questions about specific letter situations, the use of form paragraphs, and the like. All these preliminaries are necessary to make clear that there is a need for more effective letter-writing and that the supervisor is the man to meet it, provided he gets sufficient support. The introduction of a correspondence program is often hastened by the personal sanction given it by a high official of the company, who lets it be known, preferably in writing, that he is heart and soul for the program.

A common and effective method of making a firm's correspondence more productive is to train its dictators, stenographers, and typists. This may be done by means of class or of conference work. The former is more suitable for employees in minor positions, whereas the latter is favored

when dealing with executive personnel. Some firms have company schools which must be attended by every employee until he has finished the various courses offered. Careful records of the grade of work done by each employee are kept and later used as part basis for promotion.

If the correspondence supervisor conducts classes, he should avoid creating a schoolroom atmosphere. He should seat the members of the class around a table for informal discussions of their work. Both in word and in manner he should let it be known that he has come not to impose a particular system of writing letters on them, but merely to offer some practical hints by means of which a person may decide for himself whether a particular letter has reader adaptation, compactness, individuality, and is therefore likely to react favorably on the recipient. Usually attendance in class is not compulsory except in well-organized company schools which provide for the graduation of their students on the basis of the number of courses completed and the character of work accomplished. Sometimes the classes and conference sessions in letter-writing conducted by firms are directed by college teachers of business English and correspondence.

The content of these various courses given as part of the supervisory scheme is made to include only those subjects on which a firm may have occasion to write letters or reports. It is made practical and really helpful to those attending, since their own letters are used as a basis for the group discussion and furnish the incentive for both critical analysis and general improvement. Many employees are eager to learn, if by so doing they can improve their standing with the firm. Moreover, they are more or less at home in the subjects discussed at the meetings so that they can take an interested and intelligent part in them. One of the subjects which receives special attention in company courses in letter-writing is how best to express the firm's policies and ideals in letters so as to keep and to gain customer good-will. In commenting on course content, the correspondence supervisor of a public service corporation writes:

For a number of years we have conducted classes in Business English, usually from October to May, each class meeting one night a week. The elementary class is devoted to the study of grammar, spelling, sentence construction, etc., and the advanced class to that of actual business writing. Diplomas are granted to those who satisfactorily complete both courses. The classes are largely attended by junior employees who wish to improve their English and at the same time acquire some training in the art of letter-writing.

We also conduct from time to time informal discussion groups of correspondents by departments or divisions. Each group is in charge of some cor-

respondent who, by ability and familiarity with the work, is able to offer very definite suggestions, both to improve the general tone of the correspondence as well as to furnish technical information covering the particular field. These classes have proved quite valuable, and they are organized whenever the need arises.

In one of our departments, we have a correspondence reviewer who devotes his full time to reading and criticizing all letters sent by the various correspondents. He also meets with those whose work is not of a satisfactory grade and attempts to bring it up to the required standard.

In addition to carbon copies of various letters, materials used in company classes in letter-writing include the usual standard texts on the subject and supplementary books on grammar, spelling, and other more or less elementary phases of language expression. Some correspondence supervisors use their own books, which consist largely of bulletins issued on various phases of the subject. The actual method of teaching used most generally is the so-called case method by which the class is given a case or problem requiring for its solution the writing of an original letter or else the improvement of an old one. Since these problems are usually taken from the firm's own letter files, their solution affords the members of the class an opportunity for the application of that knowledge which is required also in their daily work.

To make the class work most effective, many a correspondence supervisor will follow up individual cases by means of conferences. If he finds, for example, that John Thompson of the credit department dictates excellent letters, he will call the matter to the attention of the credit manager, who may or may not be cognizant of the man's letter-writing ability. If, on the other hand, John Thompson's letters require careful checking for mistakes in English, the supervisor will see that this employee receives special help to overcome this handicap as quickly as possible. And if perchance John Thompson has not profited at all by his grammar school training in English and continues to make serious errors in his letters despite the supervisor's efforts, then the latter is likely to suggest to the man's boss that he be replaced by someone more conversant with the use of English in business. In short, the alert correspondence director knows the good and the bad qualities of every dictator in his firm and will suit his work to the dictator's needs, that he may obtain maximum results in a short time. By eliminating poor dictators and by developing mediocre into good dictators, he can save the firm money and simultaneously better the general quality of its correspondence.

*Methods of Control*

One of the leading functions of a good system of correspondence supervision is to keep a close check on all outgoing correspondence to prevent blunders of one sort or other from reaching the firm's customers and the public in general. The need for such control is illustrated by the reply which a young correspondent made to an old customer who had wired for immediate shipment of his order. It read: "Keep cool. Other people want our goods, too. Letter follows," and it lost the customer.

Control of outgoing correspondence has one objectionable result—delay. Obviously, important letters requiring immediate despatch cannot be held up for the supervisor. Some firms overcome this difficulty by requiring the transcriber to send the original letter direct to the dictator and simultaneously an extra carbon copy to the checker, who by telephone notifies the dictator of any mistakes he has found. The following day the file copy is checked to make sure that the suggested corrections were made in the outgoing letters.

Most correspondence directors limit their control to criticism of carbon copies of the day's dictation. Mistakes are called to the individual correspondent's attention by means of notes attached to the carbon copies or else in a personal conference. Explanations of errors contain both a statement of the error and a suggested revision. By keeping in mind corrections made in his letters and by referring to his file, a dictator can readily avoid making the same blunder over again.

To make an inspection, the correspondence critic of a western manufacturing company, selecting a group of offices, asks the manager of each office to furnish him with copies of all letters dictated in his office during certain days to follow. The selection of offices is made arbitrarily and without advance notice to their respective managers. At the close of each day during the inspection period, the correspondence critic receives the extra carbon copies of all letters dictated in the offices selected. If he finds no errors of any sort, he destroys the copies except those of excellent letters, which are returned to the dictator with notes of commendation. Otherwise, the letters are corrected and saved for discussion with the dictators and stenographers.

The experience of this firm has been that it is best to limit the inspection work to the maximum number of letters which the supervisor can read and correct during the morning working hours so that he may devote the afternoon hours to discussions with interested employees in their respective offices. In this way, the work is handled currently, and there is a



its dictation to the correspondence department, which assumes full responsibility for the contents of the letters it handles. It receives, sorts, and answers the company's mail. When the other method is used, the responsibility is left with the department head, to whom the correspondent is directly responsible.

It is clear that the centralized correspondence department functioning as a distinct unit, its operation devoted to the sole aim of handling the firm's letters, can by force of its unity turn out a more productive letter than can a department in which dictation is but a minor and often much neglected phase of its work. Usually the personnel of such a department consists of specialists, each devoted to his particular task. The chief disadvantage of the scheme is the frequent necessity of the correspondents to confer with the officials of the various departments and to consult their files to obtain the needed information for the letters which are to be dictated. Close coöperation between the correspondence department and the other departments frequently overcomes this drawback.

Of interest in connection with the subject of centralized correspondence departments is the comment made by the correspondence supervisor of a department store:

We have a centralized mailing and letter department, where the bulk of customer correspondence is written and where every letter, including those written in other offices, is censored before it leaves the store, except letters coming from the Executive Office.

Every secretary, stenographer, and typist who is to write letters is given a test before she is employed, thus obviating the waste caused by labor turnover if the applicant is hired on the prevalent "trial and error" method. She then reports to the Letter Department for supervised reading of the instruction book and also for training in accordance with our store policy and our standards of correspondence. She is assigned a code number which appears on all letters typed by her, for she is responsible for the content of every letter she writes. She stays in the Letter Department for preliminary training as long as her services can be spared by the office to which she is to be assigned.

Once a month the supervisor of letters holds a meeting of all the secretaries, stenographers, and typists, at which the girls' own letters are discussed. For each day on which the supervisor censors letters, she saves copies of poor letters, removes all marks of identification, distributes these letters at the meeting and offers suggestions for improvement. The letters are taken up individually with the girls who wrote them the very same day they are sent to the Letter Department to be censored. The discussions at the meeting are devoted to the actual problems of letter-writing, the English used, and to the exposition of store policies. The girls join freely in the discussions and are

keenly interested. From time to time a Better Letter Bulletin on pertinent subjects is issued by the supervisor.

### *Aids to Correspondence Supervision*

To maintain interest in better letters even after satisfactory results have been obtained from the practice of supervision, contests, lectures, bulletins, and manuals are used. Just as a sales manager offers a premium or a prize to the man on his force who over a period of time turns in the most orders, so the correspondence supervisor can reward the dictator of the most productive letters, so the office manager can reward the speediest and most accurate transcriptionist or typist. Usually contests—they are nothing more than games—are widely publicized through the firm's house magazine and other media. Charts indicating the progress made by the contestants are posted in the various offices. Each contestant's daily work is graded according to speed, accuracy, and other essential qualities. The more employees can be induced to enter the contest, the greater the enthusiasm and rivalry for the work, and the more beneficial the ultimate total results.

Lectures by men not associated with the organization provoke interest in better letters, if they are well planned and well delivered. The "outside" point of view thus presented often saves a firm's dictators from slipping back into their old and more or less pernicious writing habits, as for instance, the one of using bromidioms. Some firms urge their dictators and stenographers to attend evening classes in business writing, advertising, and kindred subjects, agreeing at the same time to defray a part of the tuition fee. Others engage instructors from high schools and colleges nearby for courses of lectures to be delivered at their places of business.

### *Bulletins and Manuals*

Perhaps the most extensively used means of stimulating and maintaining interest in better business letters is the bulletin. It is a neatly mimeographed, multigraphed, or printed sheet of not more than a few pages, usually numbered, dated, and sometimes illustrated, as well as punched for easy filing, giving specific information on one or more phases of letter-writing. This—the informational—bulletin has largely replaced the so-called inspirational bulletin, which contained little more than a somewhat humorous "pep" talk.

Correspondence bulletins should be reasonably short, clear, and attractive in appearance so that they may be read quickly by busy employees. Their messages should be written forcefully to insure an interested read-

ing, leading to the acceptance and use of the ideas and plans suggested. Sometimes a humorous touch, represented by a stunt letter, is sufficient to present an idea more vividly. The data in the bulletin are best based on gleanings from company correspondence, both incoming and outgoing. Thus, there is no end of topics with which the bulletins may deal.

The majority of correspondence bulletins are devoted to a presentation of the fundamental principles of good English composition. The value of any one bulletin depends on the practicability of its message. In other words, the bulletin is likely to serve its purpose only if the recipient feels it contains suggestions which he can apply *in the day's work*. To keep interest alive, bulletins are usually issued regularly once or twice a month, and comments by their recipients are invited. There are, however, firms that issue bulletins only when a special need arises. This is especially true of firms having no full-time supervisor, but yet feeling the need for some supervision. Accordingly, the office manager, the chief clerk, or the head-stenographer is appointed to inform dictators and stenographers of changes in company policy and of other matters likely to affect the form or content of the firm's letters.

## ILLUSTRATIONS

### SPECIAL EDIPHONE INSTRUCTIONS

#### FOR THE DICTATOR

When dictating, always hold the upper edge of the mouthpiece lightly touching your upper lip. Look away from the Ediphone and picture the one you address as standing several feet away. Talk to him distinctly--naturally.

Never release the thumb latch before you stop speaking, and always be sure that the cylinder is in motion before you start to speak.

Put expression into your dictation so that the transcriber will know how to punctuate; mention paragraphs, parentheses, quotation marks, and unusual punctuations desired.

If the correspondence sent in the mail-pocket does not readily give the transcriber information, first pronounce and then spell proper names, technical terms, and unusual words.

Cover your "Ediphone" each night when you leave.

# Better Letters

## Barrington Company System

### ADVICE IS CHEAP!

Harry Lauder sings a humorous song about people "who are very good at giving him a thing he does not need, especially what they call good advice." Perhaps he was inspired to write these words after considering the average correspondent's careless use of advice and advise.

*Advice* and *advise* are good words, but they should not be used for inform, make known, tell, say, notify, warn, caution, instruct, acquaint, etc. *Advice* is based upon a superior professional knowledge, or a wide acquaintance with things in general. A doctor gives *advice* to his patient; a parent *advises* his child. A lawyer gives *advice* to his client in points of law.

The electric company, however, does not *advise* a customer that the payment of his bill is overdue, nor that his request for information is receiving prompt attention. It is better to *inform*, or *tell*, him of these matters.

The Company *informs* the public of its activities by means of newspaper advertisements; a representative of the Company *informs* a customer by letter of the day on which his meter will be installed; etc.

#### Examples follow:

Poor: If this is not satisfactory, please *advise* us promptly.

Better: If this is not satisfactory, please *notify* us promptly.

Poor: He *advised* us that the bill had not been paid.

Better: He *told* us that the bill had not been paid.

Poor: Will you please *advise* us where we can get the key?

Better: Will you please *let* us know where we can get the key?

F B CASE

Correspondence Director

February 22, 19. .

**Better-Lettergram****No. 14**

Issued in the interest of Better Business Letters  
By the White Company  
As a guide to its Dictators, Stenographers, and Dictating  
Machine Transcribers.

Duluth, Minn.

December 14, 19--.

**Subject:****EMBASSIES OF CONFIDENCE**

An important mission of a letter is to inspire confidence in the reader. A great many letters fail miserably in this respect. Too often they sound a gloomy or uncertain note; carelessness and indifference are plainly manifested by the partial or indefinite information which they convey. Such qualities have no appeal for the reader and are anything but confidence-inspiring.

It cannot reasonably be expected that other than an unsatisfactory reaction will result from such messages as these:

1. "We have no excuse to offer except that this order was probably sidetracked some-  
how, so we didn't get it in time to make  
shipment on the required date."
2. "We expected the frames might be ready for  
shipment by this date; however, they may be  
somewhere in the place, and we have hope  
they will be released."
3. "We will probably not be able to repair  
this machine as it is likely very old; we  
have not seen it yet."
4. "Maybe, at some future date, you can turn  
this spring over to our department."
5. "Possibly we can send these out some time  
during the last week of next month, or  
sooner."

In the preceding examples the reader is given insufficient and indefinite information. Lack of interest on the dictator's part is also evident.

It is not always possible to furnish information that will be pleasing or that will inspire confidence. In such instances, a special effort

should be made to reconcile the reader to the existing situation. Make him feel that everything possible has and will be done to meet his particular needs; supply just as much definite information as is available.

More complete and positive information is contained in the following sentences, which should leave the reader in a more satisfactory frame of mind:

1. "We have no excuse to offer for the delay in the shipment of this order. Unfortunately, it was sidetracked and not received from the factory in time to make shipment on the date specified. We can but express regret and apologize for the delay."
2. "We expected the frames to be ready for shipment by this time. They have not yet been released, and no definite information is available as to why they have not been. Although unsatisfactory, this is the only information that we can give you, now."
3. "Although we have not seen the machine, we believe it to be a very old model, in which case it will probably be impossible to effect the necessary repairs. Upon receipt of the machine, we shall give you a definite opinion."
4. "It is possible that the spring can be returned to this department at some later date, although we can make no definite promise to that effect."
5. "We hope to be able to send these out during the week of December 23—possibly sooner."

When the correspondence program has functioned for a time and has brought noticeable improvement in the form and the context of the letters, the supervisor is usually ready to issue his *opus magnum*—a comprehensive manual for use by dictators, stenographers, and typists. In it he incorporates the most valuable parts of the various bulletins and instruction sheets he has issued from time to time. Indeed many manuals are little more than compilations of bulletin material. More often, however, the one preparing the manual has in mind a booklet of instructions on all matters pertaining to company correspondence to serve as a text on letter-writing for new employees and as a reference work for old employees. Manuals are often issued first in multigraphed form to test the practicability of their content. If they are accorded a favorable reception

by their users, who often suggest improvements, they are then printed for more permanent use.

The reader will gain a better idea of the nature of correspondence manuals from the foreword and the table of contents of a typical manual, entitled *Productive Letters*, issued to the employees of a department store:

### FOREWORD

A BUSINESS institution is judged by its letters as well as by its people. A well dictated letter may fail in its purpose because of poor arrangement, untidy appearance, or misspelled words. Priest's letters must be truly representative and maintain the high standards desired.

WHENEVER we meet a customer face to face, we have an opportunity to make a friend. Every letter written offers the same opportunity, and you must do your part in creating and holding this friendship.

THE most important data used in transcribing letters have been brought together in convenient form in the following pages. The information should be of great interest to correspondents, stenographers, transcribers, and typists, since it explains the manner in which the work should be done to bring the greatest success. Careful observation of the instructions given will result in neat, well-arranged letters, which will truly represent our business.

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### *Broader View of Correspondence Supervision*

Most supervisors of correspondence labor under a severe handicap. Far too commonly their work is regarded as of only temporary necessity. Thus a firm will have supervision of its correspondence until its personnel has felt the inspiring influence of the supervisor and his helpful methods. The period of supervision resembles the old church revival: when sufficient converts to the cause have been made, the revivalist is told to go elsewhere. Yet in firms of considerable size, the correspondence is so voluminous and the number of mediocre dictators and stenographers so large as to justify the appointment of a permanent director of correspondence or else the establishment of a separate department of correspondence.

The very fact that the average supervisor's period of service is comparatively short prevents him from shaping policies which would tend to raise the quality of the firm's letters very considerably. Many dictators and stenographers with whom he has to work are unfit for their tasks and retain their positions because of lack of authority on the part of the supervisor to replace them with competent personnel. Occasionally, faced by glaring incompetency, a department head will agree to the transfer of an employee to another department. In the majority of cases, however, the correspondence supervisor must accept and work with the personnel as he finds it, no matter how mediocre it, as a whole, may be.

Only a few firms, really progressive, have added to their permanent staffs correspondence supervisors with full authority to control the working conditions, wages, promotions and demotions of the persons actively engaged in correspondence work. Because these men were vested with authority, they have been able to effect more or less sweeping changes quickly and successfully, changes which men with lesser authority would not have attempted for at least six months or a year. These changes have had to do mostly with devising tests for new dictators, stenographers, and typists;



with adequate methods of training these employees; and with more or less rigorous methods of control of all outgoing letters.

The prediction made some years ago by a well-known correspondence supervisor that the majority of progressive firms in America would soon have separate correspondence departments with directors in full charge was premature. Even though business relies on letters to make most of its contacts with the buying public, it seems satisfied with a mediocre product. Despite the plentiful propaganda on behalf of better letters waged so spiritedly by business periodicals, better letter clubs, and teachers of English, the quality of the average business letter is very likely to remain low for reasons stressed elsewhere in this work.

### PROBLEMS

1. On the basis of a dozen or more letters (originals or carbons) dictated by the same person, prepare a brief report in which you suggest the means which a correspondence supervisor might use to improve the quality of these letters. Submit the letter material with your report, which should present a thorough analysis of each letter from the standpoint of form as well as content.
2. Assume that your class in business letter writing has been divided into several groups and that you have been asked to supervise the correspondence of one of them for a certain length of time. Submit a plan outlining specifically the procedure you would use:
  - a. for getting letters from your fellow students regularly
  - b. for criticizing them
  - c. for setting up and maintaining suitable standards.
3. It is a month since you prepared the solution to the foregoing problem. On the basis of a written outline, which you submit to your instructor, be prepared to give orally a summary of your experience as correspondence supervisor. Comment on letters which you consider well or poorly written, suggesting ways to improve the latter.
4. Make a survey of the methods of correspondence supervision used by a certain group of local firms (department stores; banks; manufacturers); then prepare a comprehensive written report of your findings.
5. Obtain bulletins, manuals, and other instructional helps used by the correspondence supervisors of a number of local or outside firms with a view to determine the value of such aids to better letters and the extent to which they are used. Present your findings to your class orally or in writing, as your instructor may direct.

## CHAPTER XXII

### REPORTS

#### *The Need for Reports*

The complexity of modern business resulting from large size and manifesting itself in extensive departmentalization prevents the management from keeping in personal touch with the various organization units. To meet this situation—to keep the administrative officers of a business informed of the progress made by the individual departments, branches, or other divisions—a chain of reports is utilized. Furthermore, the exigencies of many a business to reduce costs and to operate on a smaller margin of profit in order to meet formidable competition can be met only if the organization has at hand for immediate use basic, up-to-the-minute, and unbiased information concerning its own and competitors' affairs. The tendency toward large-scale operation with consequent multiplication of operating units and the increasing difficulty of maintaining a business of appreciable size on a really profitable basis have multiplied the needs for

extensively for submitting factual data resulting from thoughtful and unprejudiced investigation. Expert professional advice often takes the form of reports. The certified public accountant's report apprising a client of the financial condition of his business and the professional engineer's report recommending or declining to recommend this or that project, as well as the many reports made and circulated by municipalities, state and national governments, belong to this group.

### *The Nature of Reports*

A report states in succinct but comprehensive form provable facts and unbiased conclusions usually based on a first-hand analysis of conditions or materials. In scope it may be limited. In length it may consist of a single page, as a letter report, or of hundreds of pages, as a research report, such as the annual report of the Smithsonian Institution. In tone it may be formal or informal. It may be meant for the layman or for the technician. Its purpose may be merely to marshal certain facts with or without recommendations for future action. It may be issued periodically or only on special occasions.

Whatever the particular nature of a report, it must be based on realities. Comprehensive and thorough investigation characterized by sound judgment must have preceded the writing of it. The more objective the investigation has been, the more free from personal bias is the result likely to be. But unless report data are *factual* data—truths—they are, for all practical intents and purposes, worthless. This means that the report writer should cultivate a scientific approach to problems, that he should be an impartial observer and recorder of the truth, regardless of whether the conclusions will be pleasant or unpleasant to the reader of the report. For, it cannot be stressed too often, *a report not founded on fact is no report at all*.

It should be at once apparent from the foregoing that the business report differs considerably from the business letter, since the general purpose of every letter is always to awaken in the reader a favorable emotional attitude (good-will) toward the writer. Nevertheless, there are business reports written to influence stockholders, customers, and prospective customers. Since they deviate from fact purposely in order to retain good-will, they are little more than disguised house propaganda. Even the monthly reports made by the department head to his boss often represents departmental conditions not as they are but as the head would have the boss believe them to be. Really objective reports are produced by experts—usually professional men with a high regard for the truth.

hensive in the view they afford the reader, and more far-reaching in the conclusions they permit. The daily reports of timekeepers, efficiency men, salesmen, and agents furnish the materials for the monthly departmental record reports. The office of a certain efficient credit department receives monthly the following items which are utilized in its reports:

Sales for the month	Suspense accounts collected during month
Collections for the month	Net loss for month
Percentage of collections to sales	Accounts charged to suspense for year to date
Yearly sales to date	Suspense accounts collected for year to date
Yearly collections to date	Net loss for year to date
Percentage of collections to sales	Percentage of loss to sales
Percentage of increase of sales over preceding year's	Profit and loss collections for month
Percentages of increase of collections over preceding year's	Profit and loss collections for year to date
Outstanding on first of month	Percentage of sixty-day list to outstandings
Percentage of collections to outstandings	Number of days business outstandings.
Total of sixty-day list	
Accounts charged to suspense during the month.	

The formal annual report of a president of a corporation reviewing compactly and forcefully the activities of his organization since the issuance of his last report is another example of the record report. Important administrative record reports are usually modeled closely after previous reports as to form and nature of contents.

### *Special Reports*

The range of special reports, sometimes called examination reports, is as wide as business itself. Thus the investigation calling for the report may concern the relative merits of various collection systems in vogue by retail stores, the advantages and disadvantages of equipping offices with noiseless typewriters or with dictaphones, the methods of marketing used in South America by European implement manufacturers, or it may be a survey of profit-sharing plans used in the steel industry, even a census of the world. The extent of such reports varies with the importance of the data to be examined and the time and trouble required to get them. A survey of filing equipment used by banks in one city may be made in a comparatively short time, whereas a survey of unemployment in the United States would require much more time. To draw an ac-

curate and vivid picture of the reasons prompting many young boys and girls to take to the road, a learned reporter "bummed" with them for two years. And to report as faithfully as he could on the *Origin of Species*, Darwin spent many years in patient and most searching investigation.

It should be clear that the special report differs from the routine report in that its main function is not to furnish certain stipulated data, but rather to present information relating to past and present conditions with a view to subjecting it to thorough and critical analysis. The investigation report should lead to the formation of sound conclusions, and, when asked for, to recommendations. It involves the gathering of all pertinent information and its subsequent analysis. Thoroughness demands that every item of information relevant to the investigation be collected and considered. Such reports are limited by the time and money available for the project as well as by the investigator's knowledge and ability. In business, special reports are usually made on request or by agreement. For example, an advertising agency may be instructed by its client to examine the possibilities for marketing canned rattlesnake meat profitably. Outside of business, investigation reports are frequently initiated by the investigator himself, as, for example, the reports (theses) of Darwin or Einstein.

To secure data for analysis, both office and field work is necessary. Office work includes the formulation of the problem—a preliminary study of the entire work to be done with a view to determining the most effective beginning. The investigator may consult newspapers, technical periodicals, books, and reference works for information already published on the subject. He may talk the problem over with co-workers and others to get as broad a viewpoint of it as possible. He formulates a definite method of procedure. Field work may require interviewing laymen or specialists, making tests and observations. Both office and field work necessitate constant and accurate note-taking, sometimes with the aid of various scientific apparatus.

If definite suggestions for future action are appended to a special report, it becomes an investigation report with recommendations—a recommendation report. These suggestions are based on data found in the report so that the reader may determine the validity of the recommendations for himself. Under ordinary conditions, a business man will ask for recommendations only when the investigator is an expert in his field. Consultants in advertising, selling, office and personnel administration, shop work, and many other phases of business and industry are en-

gaged in order to obtain their written recommendations based on more or less exhaustive investigation of certain conditions. The majority of reports submitted by consulting engineers to their clients are special (recommendation) reports.

The investigation with recommendations affords the report writer an opportunity to present his own solution of the problem and thus to bring the investigation, at least in so far as he is concerned, to a definite close. The very fact that a recommendation—his own reaction—is required will prompt the investigator to marshal in the report all pertinent data in logical order so that the reader may readily grasp their relative significance. The actual statement of recommendation is seldom long: it usually consists of a number of short paragraphs, each containing a recommendation.

### Sources of Information

Usually the extent of an investigator's experience, training, and general ability determines the kind, quality, and number of sources of information to which he will turn. On problems relating to their own affairs, most business men will seek information first of all in their files of letters and reports, and in their various books of account. These records, yielding data for a thorough understanding of the whole problem, frequently suggest the right sort of approach and solution. This is true because every problem arising has elements common to similar problems solved already. It is up to the investigator to find out what these common elements are in order to isolate them.

The most common means through which information may be secured by the report writer are:

1. observation
2. reading
3. writing
4. interviewing.

#### *Observation*

For certain kinds of reports, first-hand investigations are indispensable. This direct method of securing data is applied usually to research pertaining to office, sales, and advertising efficiency, and to many other diversified problems, the solution of which necessitates personal observation. Marketing agencies and various consultants in business and industry usually have staffs of trained observers, whose services are commanded by business men in the solution of important problems. These investigators are

specialists in their respective fields and know from experience how best to attack a given problem. They are sensitive to the intricacies of their tasks, which they approach with no preconceived judgments.

Only persistent practice makes for skill in observation. Accuracy should be the observer's foremost aim. Too many of us are superficial "see-ers" and listeners; in fact, our range of sense perception is often so narrow that few of us can rely on our sense impressions.

The process of observation is aided measurably by the use of the right sort of tools, which may include notebooks, questionnaires, maps, and various scientific instruments. It is one thing to observe correctly, but quite another to record correctly. Few investigators trust important observations to their memories for long: rather they prefer to write them down immediately so that no important detail may escape. Where possible, they will repeat the observation under the same conditions to check its accuracy. This can readily be done in the case of various procedures and processes used in business and industry. Thus, if a report is asked on the routing of orders or on the process of turning crude rubber into automobile tires, the careful investigator will test his initial impressions by a second, and even a third, survey.